SHERLOCK'S

LETTERS.

A

NEW LETTERS

FROM

AN ENGLISH TRAVELLER.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN FRENCH

BY THE REV. MARTIN SHERLOCK, A. M.

Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of BRISTOL.

And now tranſlated into Engliſh by the Author.

Incenditque animum famæ venientis amore. VIRG.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

EARL OF BRISTOL,

LORD BISHOP OF DERRY,

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

I AM proud of your patronage, because you grant it only to the deserving. Your eye is penetrating, and you saw that my soul was pure.

It is not, my Mæcenas, because your Family is one of the most ancient and

moſt illuſtrious of Great Britain; nor becauſe you are full of Honours and Riches, a Peer of England, as well as of Ireland, and in poſſeſſion of twenty thouſand pounds a year, that I think you reflect honour upon me: it is becauſe your ſoul is mild and noble, your underſtanding great and juſt, and becauſe you are the Friend of Mankind.

Cuſtom requires Authors to overwhelm their Patrons with compliments. I intreat your Lordſhip to diſpenſe with my obſerving this cuſtom: if my book is good, the dedication of it is the greateſt compliment I

can pay you; if the book is bad, compliments would be uſeleſs, for they would not be read.

I am,

with the moſt profound reſpect,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

moſt obedient humble ſervant,

MARTIN SHERLOCK.

PREFACE.

READERS in general have ſo little knowledge and taſte, that it is almoſt madneſs to appear in print. There are, however, ſome exceptions; and I hope, Reader, you are one. If you are *not*, I declare frankly to you, you would do me more pleaſure to throw my book in the fire than to read it: if you *are*, I aſk you no quarter; — Glory or Death.

PREFACE

TO THE

ENGLISH READER.

I SOUGHT glory, and I obtained it. My Letters had as much ſucceſs, on the continent, as any proſe-work of the ſame ſize publiſhed within the century, which I attribute principally to the truth and ſimplicity with which they were written. The Reader has remarked in the original Preface that I did not court Fame with too much modeſty; and he has, no doubt, alſo remarked the reaſon of it:

it: in an enemy's country in time of war, modeſty would have been meanneſs, and humility want of ſpirit.

Few men write but for fame or for money: I *tranſlate* theſe letters for neither. *Why* I tranſlate them is a ſecret which I ſhall probably one day communicate to the Public.

As it is my intention to continue to write, I ſhall receive all criticiſms, public and private, with thankfulneſs. I requeſt the Reader's indulgence for my ſtyle. An abſence of ſeveral years has almoſt made me loſe my language. Foreign phraſes force themſelves on me. But let the Reader treat this my * firſt attempt in Engliſh

* The other volume of my letters was tranſlated by a gentleman whom I have never ſeen. They were publiſhed while I was abroad.

with a little mildneſs, and I promiſe him I ſhall endeavour to improve in my next. I do not know whether I ſhall ever attain elegance; but I am ſure, that all the pages I ſhall ever write ſhall be, like theſe, innocent and chearful.

NEW

NEW LETTERS

FROM

AN ENGLISH TRAVELLER.

LETTER I.

ITALY.

IF the Pruſſians are proud of their *Grand Frederic*, the Italians are not leſs proud, nor with leſs reaſon, of their *Bella Italia*. It's beauty is aſtoniſhing; and from Mantua, where Virgil was born, to Sorrento, the country of Taſſo, every ſtep has its particular intereſt; every ſtep has been the country

country of ſome illuſtrious artiſt, the ſubject of a deſcription of ſome great poet, or the ſcene of ſome famous action, tranſmitted to poſterity by a celebrated hiſtorian.

Padua produced Livy; Venice, Titian; and Ferrara, Arioſto. Tuſcany boaſts of Dante, of Petrarch, and of Michael Angelo; Urbino of Raphael; and Parma of Corregio; Rome gave birth to Tacitus and Lucretius; Arpinum to Cicero; and Venuſium to Horace.

The recollection of hiſtorical facts does not leſs awaken the informed traveller. In paſſing the Rubicon (1),

(1) In ſpeaking of the Rubicon, can one forbear to quote this line of Lucan?

Ingens viſa duci patriæ trepidantis imago.

To Cæſar's eyes
Rome's large, but trembling figure, ſeem'd to riſe.

he

he remembers, that on its bank Cæſar decided the fate of Rome; and at the foot of this * ſtatue, ſays he, he expiated his ambition. In this ſpot Hannibal ſaw the maſters of the world fly; and by this rock the victorious Gauls ſcaled the Capitol. Here Virginius ſhewed the dagger drawn from the boſom of his daughter to the terrified People, and on this wall Rome ſaw with tears the head of her † Conſul.

This, Sir, is the country of Imagination; the country of Poets and of Painters. It was here that Arioſto drew his inimitable deſcriptions; that Guido was able to conceive and exe-

* The ſtatue of Pompey in the Spada Palace at Rome.

† Cicero.

cute his Aurora; and that Rouſſeau, tranſported by *an half-hour of enchantment*, learned to deſcribe the riſing of the Sun.

If the landſcapes of Claude Lorrain are juſtly preferred to all others, what is the reaſon of it? His landſcapes are Italian landſcapes. But when ſhould I finiſh, if I began to ſpeak of the pictures of Italy? The moſt beautiful of the univerſe is that of Italy itſelf. Nature formed it in a happy moment, drew it in her grand ſtyle, and finiſhed its parts with a perfection that it is impoſſible to deſcribe. She ſeems to have made an effort to unite all her beauties in a ſingle work; and, to give to her favourite maſter-piece all the advantages of which a picture is capable, ſhe has contraſted its parts with a happineſs

happineſs that doubles their effects. Smiling aſcents and fertile plains, majeſtic rivers and delightful lakes, rich hills and richer vallies, are diſpoſed almoſt with art.

But a continual profuſion of beauties, though varied, would have ſatiated at length. And has not this been foreſeen by this great and always wiſe artiſt? and has ſhe not diſtributed ſhades, to give a relief to her principal figures, and to give repoſe to the Imagination? Here it is a chain of barren mountains, and there a vaſt and dreary marſh. Nor are the terrible beauties wanting; a burning volcano, and ſeveral others extinguiſhed; frightful precipices; mountains of rocks * ſplit,

* As at Caieta.

and whole * tracts of country ſhattered by earthquakes. That is the picture; and this is its frame; the Mediterranean and the Alps.

Would not one be tempted to think all was the effect of ſtudy and calculation? When the work was finiſhed, one thing ſtill remained to be done; and that was, to ſhew it. Anxious for the ſucceſs of her favourite creation, Nature placed it in the beſt light, under a brilliant Sun, which animates the colours of the picture, and diſpoſes the ſpectator to taſte its beauties; and, as if ſhe meant not to neglect the ſmalleſt circumſtances, has ſhe not ſhewn this triumph of her hand through the moſt beautiful *me-*

* When you are on the mountain behind Baiæ, look all round.

dium that was ever ſeen? The atmoſphere of Italy embelliſhes all objects by ſhewing them with * clearneſs; and its gulfs, its woods, its caſcades, and its meads, have a grace unknown beneath other ſkies.

* Clearneſs, in my opinion, is the firſt grace of Eloquence, of Poetry, and, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, of all the works of Art and Nature.

LETTER II.

ITALY.

YOU were born, Sir, with a brilliant imagination and lively feelings; and you felt and enjoyed the beauties of Italy. You feel conſequently the weakneſs of my pencil; but the weight of the ſubject demands indulgence; the Genius of Virgil ſunk under it.

Sed neque Medorum ſylvæ, ditiſſima terra,
Nec pulcher Ganges, atque auro turbidus Hermus,
Laudibus Italiæ certent: non Bactra neque Indi,
Totaque thuriferis Panchaïa pinguis arenis.
Hæc loca non tauri ſpirantes naribus ignem
Invertêre, ſatis immanis dentibus hydri;
Nec galeis, denſiſque virûm ſeges horruit haſtis.
Sed gravidæ fruges, et Bacchi Maſſicus humor
Implevere:

Implevere: tenent oleæque, armentaque læta.
Hinc bellator equus campo ſeſe arduus infert:
Hinc albi, Clitumne, greges, & maxima taurus
Victima, ſæpè tuo perfuſi flumine ſacro,
Romanos ad templa Deûm duxere triomphos.
Hîc ver aſſiduum, atque alienis menſibus æſtas:
Bis gravidæ pecudes, bis pomis utilis arbos.
At rabidæ tigres abſunt & ſæva leonum
Semina; nec miſeros fallunt aconita legentes:
Nec rapit immenſos orbes per humum, neque tanto
Squameus in ſpiram tractu ſe colligit anguis.
Adde tot egregias urbes, operumque laborem,
Tot congeſta manu præruptis oppida ſaxis,
Fluminaque antiquos ſubter labentia muros.
An mare quod ſuprà, memorem, quodque alluit infra?
Anne lacus tantos? te, Lari maxime, teque
Fluctibus & fremitu aſſurgens, Benace, marino?
An memorem portus, Lucrinoque addita clauſtra:
Atque indignatum magnis ſtridoribus æquor,
Julia quà ponto longè ſonat unda refuſo,
Tyrrhenuſque fretis immittitur æſtus Avernis?
Hæc eadem argenti rivos æriſque metalla
Oſtendit venis, atque auro plurima fluxit.
Hæc genus acre virûm, Marſos, pubemque Sabellam,
Aſſuetumque malo Ligurem, Volſcoſque verutos
Extulit: hæc Decios, Marios, magnoſque Camillos,

Scipiadas duros bello; & te, maxime Cæſar,
Qui nunc extremis Aſiæ jam victor in oris
Imbellem avertis Romanis arcibus Indum.
Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,
Magna virûm! . . . . .

(Georg. Lib. II.)

But neither Median woods (a plenteous land),
Fair Ganges, Hermus rolling golden ſand,
Nor Bactria, nor the richer Indian fields,
Nor all the gummy ſtores Arabia yields;
Nor any foreign earth of greater name,
Can with ſweet Italy contend in fame.
No bulls, whoſe noſtrils breathe a living flame,
Have turn'd our turf, no teeth of ſerpents here
Were ſown, an armed hoſt, an iron crop to bear.
But fruitful vines, and the fat olives freight,
And harveſts heavy with their fruitful weight,
Adorn our fields; and on the chearful green,
The grazing flocks and lowing herds are ſeen.
The warrior horſe, here bred, is taught to train:
There flows Clitumnus through the flowery plain;
Whoſe waves, for triumphs after proſperous war,
The victim ox and ſnowy ſheep prepare.
Perpetual ſpring our happy climate ſees;
Twice breed the cattle, and twice bear the trees;
And ſummer ſuns recede by ſlow degrees.
Our land is from the rage of tigers freed,
Nor nouriſhes the lion's angry ſeed;

Nor

Nor poiſonous aconite is here produc'd,
Or grows unknown, or is, when known, refus'd.
Nor in ſo vaſt a length our ſerpents glide,
Or rais'd on ſuch a ſpiry volume ride.
Next add our cities of illuſtrious name,
Their coſtly labour, and ſtupendous frame:
Our forts on ſteepy hills, that far below
See wanton ſtreams in winding valleys flow.
Our two-fold ſeas, that, waſhing either ſide,
A rich recruit of foreign ſtores provide.
Our ſpacious lakes; thee, Larius, firſt; and next
Benacus, with tempeſtuous billows vext.
Or ſhall I praiſe thy ports, or mention make
Of the vaſt mound that binds the Lucrine lake;
Or the diſdainful ſea, that, ſhut from thence,
Roars round the ſtructure, and invades the fence;
There, where ſecure the Julian waters glide,
Or where Avernus' jaws admit the Tyrrhene tide?
Our quarries, deep in earth, were fam'd of old
For veins of ſilver, and for ore of gold.
Th' inhabitants themſelves their country grace;
Hence roſe the Marſian and Sabellian race:
Strong-limb'd and ſtout, and to the wars inclin'd,
And hard Ligurians, a laborious kind.
And Volſcians, arm'd with iron-headed darts,
Beſides an offspring of undaunted hearts,

The Decii, Marii, great Camillus came
From hence, and greater Scipio's double name:
And mighty Cæſar, whoſe victorious arms
To fartheſt Aſia carry fierce alarms:
Avert unwarlike Indians from his Rome;
Triumph abroad, ſecure our peace at home.
Hail, ſweet Saturnian ſoil!

DRYDEN.

The copy is beautiful; and when I I ſay it is not equal to the original, every man who has not ſeen Italy will think that I am miſtaken; but every man who has ſeen it knows that I ſpeak truth.

I add here the deſcription of Pliny, that you may be able to compare the Poet and the Naturaliſt.

Et jam peractis omnibus naturæ operibus, diſcrimen quoddam rerum ipſarum atque terrarum facere conveniat. Ergo in toto orbe & quacumque cæli convexitas vergit, pulcherrima eſt omnium, rebuſque merito principatum naturæ obtinens, Italia, rectrix parensque mundi altera, viris, fœminis, ducibus,

ducibus, militibus, ſervitiis, artium præſtantiâ, ingeniorum claritatibus, jam ſitu ac ſalubritate cœli atque temperie, acceſſu cunctarum gentium facili, littoribus portuoſis, benigno ventorum afflatu (etenim contingit procurrentis poſitio in partem utiliſſimam, & inter ortus occaſuſque mediam) aquarum copiâ, nemorum ſalubritate, montium articulis, ferorum animalium innocentiâ, ſoli fertilitate, pabuli ubertate. Quidquid eſt, quo carere vita non debeat, nuſquam eſt præſtantius: fruges, vinum, olea, vellera, lina, veſtes, juvenci. Ne equos quidem in trigariis præferri ullos vernaculis animadverto. Metallis auri, argenti, æris, ferri, quamdiù libuit exercere, nullis ceſſit: & iis nunc in ſe gravida pro omni dote varios ſuccos & frugum pomorumque ſapores fundit. Ab eâ, exceptis Indiæ fabuloſis, proximè quidem duxerim Hiſpaniam, quacumque ambitur mari.

Addiſon, in his letter to Lord Halifax, had a mind to enter the liſts with Virgil. One ſees it in this line,

And Virgil's Italy ſhould yield to mine:

but it was a very unequal * conteſt.

* *Impar congreſſus.*

This

This paſſage is beautiful:

See how the golden groves around me ſmile,
That ſhun the coaſt of *Britain's* ſtormy iſle;
Or, when tranſplanted and preſerv'd with care,
Curſe the cold clime, and ſtarve in northern air.
Here kindly warmth their mounting juice ferments
To nobler taſtes, and more exalted ſcents.
Ev'n the rough rocks with tender myrtle bloom,
And trodden weeds ſend out a rich perfume.
Bear me ſome God to *Baia's* gentle ſeats,
Or cover me in *Umbria's* green retreats;
Where weſtern gales eternally reſide,
And all the ſeaſons laviſh all their pride;
Bloſſoms, and fruits, and flowers together riſe,
And the whole year in gay confuſion lies!

And this is much more ſo:

We envy not the warmer clime, that lies
In ten degrees of more indulgent ſkies,
Nor at the coarſeneſs of our heaven repine,
Tho' o'er our heads the frozen *Pleiads* ſhine:
'Tis Liberty, that crowns *Britannia's* iſle,
And makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains ſmile.

One cannot ſurfeit *you* with fine verſes, and here are ſome which are really beautiful :

Là tous les champs voiſins, peuplés de mirtes verds,
N'ont jamais reſſenti l'outrage des hivers.
Par-tout on voit meurir, par-tout on voit éclore,
Et les fruits de Pomone, et les préſens de Flore ;
Et la terre n'attend, pour donner ſes moiſſons,
Ni les vœux des humains, ni l'ordre des ſaiſons.
L'homme y ſemble goûter, dans une paix profonde,
Tout ce que la Nature, aux premiers jours du monde,
De ſa main bien-faiſante accordoit aux humains ;
Un éternel repos, des jours purs & ſereins,
Les douceurs, les plaiſirs que promet l'abondance,
Les biens de l'Age d'or, hors la ſeule innocence.
On entend pour tout bruit des concerts enchanteurs,
Dont la molle harmonie inſpire les langueurs,
Les voix de mille amans, les chants de leurs maî-
treſſes,
Qui célébrent leur honte, & vantent leurs foibleſſes.
(Henriade, Chant IX.)

Each circling plain the verdant myrtles crown,
Unknown to winter's deſolating frown ;
Pomona here her fruits profuſely pours;
Here Flora ſheds her variegated flowers ;

Here,

Here, while ſpontaneous harveſts fill the plains,
No ſeaſon changes, and no wretch complains;
Here peace, unfading, ſoothes the ſons of earth,
Such peace as reign'd at Nature's earlier birth:
With hand of ſoft indulgence ſhe diſplays
Celeſtial quiet and ſereneſt days:
Here every lawn in plenty's robe is dreſs'd,
Of every ſweet but innocence poſſeſs'd.
From ſide to ſide the ſtreams of muſic roll,
Whoſe ſoothing ſoftneſs faſcinates the ſoul:
In plaintive ſonnets burns the fair-one's flame,
Who boaſts her weakneſs, and exults in ſhame.

Tranſlated by E. BURNABY GREEN, Eſq.

Theſe lines ſeem made on purpoſe to paint the kingdom of Naples. But did M. de Voltaire draw them from nature? Certainly no: for he never ſaw a country which they ſuited. He ſtudied books rather than nature; and, if I might be permitted to hazard a conjecture, I would ſay, that he took them from the *Temple of Gnidos*, and that Monteſquieu drew them from the kingdom of Naples.

LET-

LETTER III.

ITALY.

OF all the countries in the world, Italy is the moſt adorned by the arts. Of all the countries in the world ſhe has the leaſt need of them. One might with juſtice addreſs to her this line:

L'Art n'eſt pas fait pour toi, tu n'en as pas beſoin.

ZAIRE.

Art is not made for thee, thou need'ſt it not.

The ſuperiority of her artiſts is as indiſputable as that of her natural beauties; and the names of Raphael, Palladio, Michael Angelo, and Pergoleſe impoſe ſilence upon all nations.

"Run,

"Run, fly to Naples," ſays Jean Jaques Rouſſeau to the young muſician, "to liſten to the maſter-pieces of Leo, Durante, Jommelli, and Pergoleſe." Run, fly to Italy, painter, poet, ſculptor, and architect; men of genius of every claſs, that is the country which will unfold your talents. The prodigies of art will tranſport your ſoul, and fertiliſe your imagination. The inexhauſtibleneſs of Nature, after having aſtoniſhed you, will fill you with boldneſs; you will become a creator after her example; you will dare to contend with all your predeceſſors, and even with Nature herſelf. Perhaps you will ſurpaſs her as did the author of the Apollo of Belvedere.

It is then that you will feel the futility of thoſe vulgar ſouls, who, by telling you falſehoods, mean to ſtifle your talents. "There is nothing new," exclaim they inceſſantly; "every thing has been ſaid, every thing has been repeated." Traverſe Europe, finiſh by the kingdom of Naples, and then anſwer if you have ever ſeen ſcenes equal to thoſe which fill the ſpace between the Elyſian fields and the *Cave*. Nature, however, has but four materials, rocks, trees, earth, and water. That is the explication of what I ſaid, you will create after the example of Nature. You will there perceive the number of her new combinations, and you will ſee how limited *her* means are; *your's* are infinite.

I forgot my ſubject; I was going to ſpeak of the arts. The *Transfiguration* is a ſchool of painting. If the art was loſt, and this picture remained, it would alone be ſufficient to form painters. All the parts of painting are united in it; the moſt exact drawing, the moſt ſenſible and the moſt pictureſque diſpoſition, a perfect harmony of colouring, and a ſublimity in the upper part of the picture, which tranſports the ſpectator as much as the groupes below intereſt him. Raphael was commanded to paint this ſubject; and it is in itſelf rather barren. A God cloathed in ſplendor, and illuminated by the rays of his glory, preſents of itſelf ſo ſublime an idea, that the artiſt could not miſs it. But it is the *only* idea that the ſubject offers. The painter

ter was forced to create the reſt. It is the property of genius, ſaid Leonardo de Vinci, to draw a grand production from a poor ſubject, as it is that of mediocrity to form a trifling work upon a rich ground. This ſentence and the Transfiguration determine the rank of Raphael.

Sage and ſublime this painter joined the higheſt elevation to the moſt ſevere correctneſs; and in *one* point of view he may be compared to Boileau. He was, like him, the firſt man of his country who had a lively feeling of the merit of the ancients. Happy feeling for them! It was that which acquired them a ſolid glory during their lives, and which will enſure them a perpetuity of that glory to the lateſt poſterity. They both compoſed

upon the ſame principles, and one ſees written, if I may ſo ſay, upon every picture of Raphael,

Rien n'eſt beau que le vrai, le vrai ſeul eſt aimable.

The true alone is beautiful;
The true alone is lovely.

Need I mention the elegant ſymmetry of the Attic Palladio, or the Gothic * boldneſs of Michael Angelo? Let the church of the Redeemer † and the cupola of St. Peter's ſpeak for me.

I am not fond of ſpeaking of the ſculptors of Italy. They never made any great impreſſions on me. Al-

* The Goths had infinite boldneſs (witneſs their buildings, particularly the Cathedral of Florence); but it was their only merit.

† At Venice.

though

though decidedly ſuperior to all other modern artiſts, they are ſo many degrees below the Greeks, that I never looked at their works but with coldneſs. But if this country is weak * in artiſts of this claſs, the Vatican alone, the Capitol alone, or the Tribune alone, contains more works of ſculpture made by the Greeks, and ſuperior to all praiſe, than is to be found in the reſt of Europe.

* Compared with Greece.

LETTER IV.

ITALY.

FEW nations in Europe have retained their original characters. They have almoſt all adopted the French faſhions and cuſtoms; it is a uniform that they all wear; ſome aukwardly enough; others with more grace.

The very ſmall towns in Germany have the ſame ſimplicity they had in the time of Tacitus; but in the larger cities every thing is *à la Françoiſe*. It is ſo much the better for the manners and the table; and ſo much the worſe for the morals.

It

It were to be wiſhed that the Italians, who have nothing to loſe in point of morals, would imitate the French in every thing. In the North of Italy they are much Frenchified; but the inhabitants of the South are, diſſimulation excepted, ſuch as nature formed them. The Romans have changed little as to the fundamental part of their character * ſince Saluſt. And as for the Neapolitans, they are pure (or rather indeed very *im*pure) nature.

* *Ignaviſſimi homines . . . aliud clauſum in pectore, aliud promptum in linguâ habere; amicitias, inimicitias, non ex re ſed ex commodo æſtimare; magiſque vultum quam ingenium bonum habere . . . viri pati muliebria; mulieres pudicitiam in propatulo habere.*

There is a picture painted two thouſand years ago, and its colours are ſtill freſh.

The Roman and Neapolitan are totally oppoſite; the one is cloſe and myſterious; the other frank and open. The Neapolitan cannot bear the Roman; but the Roman does not hate the Neapolitan. They ridicule each other as much as they can. The character to excite laughter in the Neapolitan Pieces is the Roman Abbé; as in the Pieces made at Rome it is the Punchinello * of Naples. They are both very jealous of the ſuperiority of their cities which have nothing in common. Rome is *ſombrous* and majeſtic; Naples is chearful and gay. Rome is the capital of the univerſe for the arts; Naples for ſituation.

* At Rome they call all the Neapolitans Punchinellos.

I con-

I confeſs, I have been often tempted to think that the Roman was born a diſſembler. Certain it is, he has great eaſe in the practice of diſſembling, and that he ſucceeds in it to admiration. Cataline, ſays Saluſt *, feigned and diſſembled all that he choſe. The nation, ſays Juvenal, affected morals, and lived in continual debauches †. But Cataline was a ſingle villain; and Juvenal only ſpeaks of the profligates of the age. Romulus pretended to ſee twelve vultures to deceive his brother. The good Numa pretended to have a correſpondence with the Nymph Egeria. The firſt

* Cujuſlibet rei ſimulator ac diſſimulator.

† Qui Curios ſimulant, et Bacchanalia vivunt.

Brutus counterfeited madneſs; and the ſecond Brutus diſſembled ſo well, that Cæſar ſaw nothing but ſmiles upon his face, until he felt his dagger in his heart.

LET-

LETTER V.

ITALY.

THERE are honeſt people every where, ſays the Norman: true; but it muſt be allowed it is leſs eaſy to find them in Italy than any where elſe. The nation is exceedingly poor, and that * counſellor of evil, Hunger, makes them commit many rogueries. It is not, however, as is generally believed, a country of robbers and aſſaſſins. My countrymen travel there almoſt continually, and for thirty years paſt there has been but one accident which happened to them, or to any of their people; and even that ought

* *Maleſuada fames.*

not

not to be mentioned as an exception. As the courier of an Engliſh duke was paſſing a river, he ſtruck one of the boat-men with his whip, and the boat-man ſhot him.

The country in general, eſpecially Naples, ſwarms with pick-pockets. The beſt advice I can give you is that which a Roman gave me. Shut your doors well, and if you loſe any thing, do not look for it. He had loſt a diamond ring worth fifty guineas, and he loſt twenty more in endeavouring to find it.

LETTER VI.

ITALY.

MEDIOCRITY is rare here; every thing is in extremes. No where is ſo fine muſic to be heard; no where (except at the opera of Paris) are the ears ſo cruelly tortured: the eyes are charmed and tormented alternately by the moſt ſuperb and moſt deteſtable pictures and ſtatues. No citizens*; an exceſſive luxury amongſt individuals †; and the people in the moſt abject miſery. It is the ſame in regard to religion; you will ſee nothing but a blind ſuperſtition or determined

* Particularly at Rome.

† Illis divitias ſuperare, nobis rem familiarem etiam ad neceſſaria deeſſe; illos binas aut amplius

mined atheiſts. But of all the extremes the moſt ſtriking are thoſe which are obſerved in the character of the nation. The Italian, in general, is exceedingly good, or wicked to a degree. There are excellent hearts in this country; but, like the great pictures, they are ſcarce. Men are born there with ſtrong paſſions, and, not receiving any education, it is not aſtoniſhing that they often commit great crimes. Under a cold exterior

plius domos continuare (*the Prince* Borgheſe *has a moſt magnificent Palace at* Rome, *a villa, whoſe riches are inconceivable within a quarter of an hour of the city, and three other villas at* Freſcati); nobis larem familiarem nuſquam ullum eſſe, Cum tabulas, ſigna, toreumata emunt, nova diruunt, alia ædificant (*this is preciſely what this Prince is doing the moment I write*); poſtremo omnibus modis pecuniam trahunt, vexant, tamen ſummâ libidine divitias ſuas vincere nequeunt.

they

they conceal burning hearts; and their exterior is cold only to conceal their hearts. Love, Jealouſy, and Revenge, are their ruling paſſions; as they think only of the ſenſual part of love, and know well the conſtitutions of their women, and the wiles of their rivals, their Jealouſy is always awake, and their Revenge is implacable.

As to underſtanding, it is nearly the ſame; men of talents form the large claſs; there are few fools; and * middling men are very rare. "Why "then, you will aſk, do theſe men "produce nothing excellent?" Becauſe they have ungoverned imaginations,

* It is the reverſe in the North of Europe: men of middling parts make the large claſs; men of abilities are ſcarce.

and

and no philoſophy; and becauſe good taſte has not yet penetrated into their country. And why has not good taſte entered Italy? Becauſe Italy has neither a London nor a Paris; and becauſe ſhe never had a * Lewis the fourteenth.

Travellers are often miſtaken in judging the Italian, eſpecially the Neapolitan. They think he has no ſenſe, becauſe he wants † ideas. A man can have but few ideas when he has never been out of his own coun-

* I know you will quote Julius II. and Leo X. Examine a little, and you will find ſome ſhades between them and Lewis the fourteenth.

† Men, ſaid a traveller to me at Naples, aſſemble in ſome countries to talk, and that is called *Company*. Sheep gather together to look at each other, and that is called *a Flock*. You ſaw Companies in France; you will ſee Flocks here.

try,

try, and when he has read nothing; but examine the Neapolitan on all the ſubjects with which he is acquainted, and you will ſee whether he wants natural capacity. He reſembles the ſoil of his country: a field well tilled in Naples produces the moſt plentiful crops; neglected, it yields but briars and thiſtles. It is the ſame with the genius of the inhabitants; cultivated, it is capable of every thing; untilled, it produces only folly and vice.

LETTER VII.

ITALY.

THE Italian women are not handſome in general; but when they make a conqueſt, they know how to keep it. More perfect than the men in the refinements of diſſimulation, they have an apparent frankneſs in their manner, which deceives even the Italians. Add to this the enchantment of their voices — I am perſuaded that the moſt dangerous of all women is a woman of wit who knows how to ſing.

I cannot ſay that theſe ladies are remarkable for the ſteadineſs of their attach-

attachments either to their huſbands or their lovers. But then they ſay it is not their fault; but the men's. Pray, Madam, ſaid I to one, how can the Ladies of this country permit themſelves ſo many lovers? Why, ſays ſhe, what would you have us do? Women were born to love, and we take a huſband. This huſband grows ſick of us in a ſhort time, neglects us, and attaches himſelf to another woman. I am ſure I never thought of a lover till I was convinced that I had been wronged. No indeed, Sir, I never was guilty of an *Infidelity of Imagination* towards my huſband till I was certain of his baſeneſs. Allow then a little for the frailty of our natures, an inattentive huſband, an aſſiduous lover, a warm climate, an

inexperienced head, and a tender heart. Is it eaſy for us to reſiſt? But ſee theſe men. — This lover quits us --- We feel a horrid void; it muſt be filled; we take another lover — and another — and another, for they all forſake us; ſo that you ſee it is not we that are to blame, but the men; for there is not one of them knows what it is to be conſtant;

E la fede degli' amanti
Come l'Araba fenice;
Che vi ſia ciaſcun lo dice,
Dove ſia neſſun lo ſa.

The conſtancy of lovers is like the Phœnix of Arabia; every body ſays there is one; nobody knows where it is.

Four verſes of Metaſtaſio make a proof for an Italian lady upon any ſubject whatever; for they enter into her

her ſoul by a part where her feelings are exquiſite; I mean by her ear. Add then the charm of Poetry to the profound Logic I have mentioned, and ſay whether you can blame theſe poor innocents for an inviolable attachment to their principles, which are happily compriſed in theſe three lines;

Molti averne,
Un goderne,
E cangiar ſpeſſo.

To have many, *(lovers)*
To enjoy one,
And to change often.

P. S. This is little to what other travellers will tell you. I often heard that the women of Naples made very lively attacks upon ſtrangers; and I remember that a young French-man

told me, on my arrival there, that the women here aſk you to come to make love to them, as they aſk you at Paris to dinner; but you may excuſe yourſelf by ſaying you are engaged.

LETTER VIII.

ITALY.

THE *Chevalier Servant* belongs excluſively to Italy, as the *Petit-Maître* does to France. The Italians formerly were full of ſentiment; and in the days of Chivalry they carried their notions of Love and Friendſhip to a height of which at preſent nobody has an idea. When a man of noble birth married a woman, feeling the impoſſibility to amuſe her continually, he entruſted her to his deareſt friend, who ſerved at once to protect her againſt foreign attacks, and to relieve the huſband of the half of his

attentions. His duty was to take care of the lady *by day*, and to amuſe her *morally* by all the means in his power.

But the beſt inſtitutions have been abuſed; and what does not time corrupt? The morals of the country have degenerated; the Platonic fire, which Petrarch had re-kindled, is now extinguiſhed, and the ſtate of the *Chevalier Servant* is become the moſt corrupt of any under Heaven: his duties are entirely changed, and his ſituation is become the moſt diſgraceful that I know, for before he can enjoy the privileges of Love, the wretch is obliged to ſacrifice Friendſhip.

The huſband ſtill chuſes the *Chevalier Servant*. Cuſtom has eſtabliſhed the practice; there is no reaſoning about it; it is a ridicule for the huſband,

huſband, and a diſhonour to the lady, if ſhe has not a *Cigiſbée*. Beſides, the huſband finds his intereſt in it; for thus he reaſons: "By giving a *Cigiſbée* "to my wife, I know well I give her a "lover; but I am in the faſhion; "cuſtom has decreed it; and I am "neither more ridiculous nor more "unhappy by the infidelity of my "wife than the reſt of my country-"men. If I do not give her one, "what is the conſequence? I paſs for "a * jealous man, and my wife, in-"ſtead of one lover, takes ſix; *the lot* "*of every Italian husband is to ſuffer* "*and to diſſemble*; and one muſt learn "to ſubmit to one's fate." His rea-

* Strange it is, that an Italian fears no ridicule ſo much as that of being thought jealous; and it is the univerſal character of the nation.

ſoning

ſoning is juſt, and his deciſion ſenſible. Of two evils he chuſes the leaſt.

Why then, you will aſk, does he marry at all? It is by the ſame reaſoning. I do not know what ancient has ſaid; "People attend; women are "an evil; but yet, Citizens, we can-"not live in our houſes without this "evil; for to be married and not to "be married is equally an evil." The circumſtances of fortune and connections, added to this calculation, determine all the Italians to marry.

Among theſe huſbands there are ſome who think themſelves cunning by giving their wives two *Chevaliers*. They imagine that one will prevent the other. Alas! they are only doubly duped.

The

The *Cigiſbée* is authorized by the huſband to viſit his wife whenever he chuſes. He aſſiſts at her toilet, attends her in her airings, to the play-houſe, is of her party at cards, &c. &c. It would be indecent to aſk a lady to dinner or ſupper without inviting her knight: it would be a want of good-breeding to aſk the huſband. Beſides, he has his own ſervice to attend; and he acts with the wife of another friend the ſame part that his friend acts with his. All this makes an *imbroglio* of Love and Friendſhip, which would be *comic* if it was not *ſhocking*.

You ſee then that opportunities are not wanting. There is, however, a particular moment in which one may ſay, that Cupid triumphs oſteneſt over Hymen; it is at the beginning of the

night. The Italians reckon their hours in a ſingular manner. They call the beginning of night the twenty-fourth hour, or the *Ave Maria*; an hour after it is one hour of night, and they continue to reckon two, three, &c. till twenty-four again. Throughout the year, at the twenty-third hour (an hour before night) the Chevalier and his Lady go out in their carriage: they ſtay together two hours, for the *Converſations* do not begin till one hour of night. The firſt of theſe two hours it is ſtill day-light; they ſee, are ſeen, and make their * bows. The ſecond hour it is dark; the Lady and Gentleman know not how to employ themſelves, and ſlander ſays —.

* Eſſential *etiquette* at Rome, and indiſpenſable at Naples.

There

There is a circumſtance which will ſurprize you ſometimes at Rome. When you addreſs a woman in a circle, her *Chevalier Servant* will be the firſt to admire your wit, to find you charming, and to do all in his power to make you agreeable to the lady. You will think in the beginning that this is diſſembled. O you are too ſevere! Theſe people have moments of ſincerity as well as others, and at that inſtant they are ſincere. It is a young prelate who pays his court, not from love, but from intereſt. His heart is fixed upon another object; and he is too happy when he can find a ſtranger to ſhare the weight of his fatigues.

You will often ſee women with three or four ſlaves in their train. They give an arm to one; another

arm

arm to a ſecond; a fan, a cloak, ſomething to carry to content the others. Be aſſured, that the moſt reſpectful is the happy man; or, in the language of the country, *the good one* (il buono), for to be exceedingly reſpectful and very diſcreet are two of the three talents that an Italian lady requires in a lover.

LETTER IX.

ITALY.

ITALIAM! Italiam! I never knew a being who ſaw it without being enchanted; nor who could ſpeak of it without enthuſiaſm. Like Shakeſpear, it is inexhauſtible in riches; and, like him, it has beauties to captivate the whole human race. The lover of natural hiſtory, of antiquity, of politicks, may find there perpetual enjoyments in the examination of the different governments, of the precious monuments * of antiquity, and of

* Delle reliquie del ſuperbo impero.

the

the prodigious variety of natural productions. If a hundred men of parts travelled through Italy, if every one of them obſerved from himſelf, and if every one of them wrote a book upon the ſubject, they might make a hundred excellent books, of which no two would be alike; and the ſubject would be ſtill new. A hundred others who ſhould follow them might ſay an infinity of true and intereſting things which never had been ſaid before.

A great enjoyment for a man who loves letters is to have, in all his walks, his Horace in one pocket, and his Virgil in the other, and to look at a thouſand objects which have been painted by theſe maſters. This, I confeſs, was one of my great pleaſures; and though few men have as much indul-

gence

gence as I have for the diverſity of taſtes among mankind, yet I cannot help ſaying I pity the traveller who is inſenſible to this pleaſure. A great writer never throws out a word at random; all his expreſſions are precious, and there are a thouſand paſſages in Virgil and Horace, which can ſcarcely be underſtood, but which it is impoſſible to feel without having ſeen Italy. *Præceps Anio*—to feel *præceps*, you muſt go to Tivoli. I could quote numberleſs examples, but I ſhall only mention one or two:

Nullus in orbe locus Baiis prælucet amœnis:

It is impoſſible to feel *prælucet* but at Baiæ.

Et *molles* imitabitur ære capillos;

ſays Horace; and the reader thinks he underſtands him; I defy him till

he has ſeen the Bronzes at Portici; and let him anſwer me when he returns from Naples.

There is a ſoftneſs in theſe hairs which cannot be conceived without ſeeing them. Virgil did not taſte theſe works leſs feelingly than Horace;

Excudent alii ſpirantia mollius æra:

Spirantia and *mollius*—You muſt go to Portici — the Mercury ſitting on the rock, the Drunken Faun, the Buſts of Plato, of Seneca, and particularly Scipio's, are beyond imagination.

Et *vivos* ducent de marmore vultus;

can only be felt at the Vatican. Marble and Bronze are cold and dead

in

in all other works that I have ſeen; they breathe only coming out of the hands of the * Greeks.

Another point of view then in which Italy appeared to me to be peculiarly intereſting is, that it gives the traveller an idea of the Greek nation. I do not ſeek to give you poliſh'd periods, nor to make a parade of a pompous and barren eloquence. I wiſh only to give you with ſimplicity ſome ideas; and I ſhall now ſhew you naturally the impreſſions that the Greeks made on me, and the manner in which thoſe impreſſions were produced.

* You remember the word of the celebrated Painter, who after having looked at the horſe of Marcus Aurelius, at the Capitol, a long time in ſilence, cried out to him, " Walk."

The firſt time I went round the Capitol, the Vatican, and the *Villa Borgheſe*, I did not permit the man who attended me to ſay a word; and I did not aſk him a ſingle queſtion. My intention was to examine every thing with impartiality, and not to be duped by the praiſes of my guide, nor to let myſelf be impoſed on by celebrated names. At the ſame time I meant to make a trial of my taſte for the Beautiful, and to ſee if I was able to diſcover what was moſt perfect, and to give to each object its juſt proportion of praiſe. I often exclaimed to myſelf, "Great! Beautiful! Sub-"lime! What aſtoniſhing men theſe "Italians!" I continued to viſit in this manner for ſome time, and my admiration of the Italians increaſed every

every day. At laſt, when I had well examined the works, I had a mind to know the authors, and to ſee if Fame and I agreed upon the merit of their performances. I aſked my guide then, by whom is that ſtatue? Sir, by a Greek ſculptor.—That one? By a Greek ſculptor.—That one? They were all by Grecian artiſts. Then, ſays I, I was miſtaken; and I muſt ſay the Greeks are aſtoniſhing, and not the Italians. From that moment to this, this idea gains ground with me every day; I conſider the Greek nation not only as the beſt ſource of a perfect taſte in all the arts, but as the only one. All the artiſts who have had the moſt perfect taſte formed themſelves upon them; and it is not ſufficient to form one's ſelf upon their

ſcholars, we muſt go to the maſters: and I do not heſitate to affirm, that the univerſal decline of taſte in the arts ariſes chiefly from neglecting to ſtudy the Greeks. I am ſo fully perſuaded of this truth, that now having the intention to write a * conſiderable work in Engliſh, I am determined, at my return to my country, to recommence the ſtudy of the Greek authors, and to take them alone for models.

The more one examines the Greeks, the more one is aſtoniſhed. They united the fire of the Italians to the patience of the Dutch, and we find amongſt them alone the moſt ſublime

* ... Aliquid jamdudum invadere magnum
Mens agitat mihi, nec placidâ contenta
quiete eſt.

works

works finiſhed with an attention that genius too often neglects. It is in conſequence of this union of genius, taſte, and patience, that the Greeks have that acknowledged ſuperiority they poſſeſs over all nations, and that by univerſal conſent a work is more perfect in proportion as it approaches more nearly to their manner. For what reaſon is the voice of Europe unanimous in favour of Raphael? Becauſe Raphael formed himſelf on the Greeks. Why is Palladio the prince of architects? Becauſe Palladio formed himſelf on the Greeks. Why are Michael Angelo, Fiammingo, Algardi, the moſt celebrated ſculptors? Only for the ſame reaſon; they all formed themſelves on the Greek models.

Examine this idea alſo in letters. Who are the moſt perfect authors in France? Racine, Boileau. In Italy? Taſſo and Metaſtaſio. In England? Addiſon and Pope, who all followed the footſteps of the Greeks; and if you take the trouble to examine the writers of the age of Auguſtus, you will ſee, that its greateſt ornaments all imitated the Greeks. Virgil borrowed from them the ground-work of his Georgics, his Eclogues, and his Æneid. Cicero formed himſelf on the Greek orators and on Homer. Is it neceſſary for me to ſay, that Terence formed himſelf on Menander, Livy on Herodotus, and Salluſt on Thucydides? Why has Horace more ſublimity than all other Lyric poets? Becauſe he formed himſelf on Pindar. Why has he

he more grace than they? Becauſe he ſtudied Anacreon and Alcæus. Why does he abound with good ſenſe, wit, and morality? Why is he an arbiter of taſte from whoſe deciſion there is no appeal? Becauſe he lived with the Athenians, and Athens was the center of good taſte, good ſenſe, of philoſophy, and the arts. *Græcia capta victorem cepit*; a man was not conſidered as well educated in the age of Auguſtus, unleſs he had paſſed a certain time at Athens; and you know that Cicero and a great part of the Roman nobility ſent their ſons there to be educated. You will ſee, that in all countries good taſte entered with the ſtudy of the Greeks; and Horace ſays,

Serus enim Græcis admovit acumina chartis,

to

to explain why bad taſte had remained ſo long amongſt the ancient Italians.

Horace and Virgil were the moſt perfect poets of their time, as Mæcenas was the *amateur* who had moſt taſte. I ſee then that theſe three men formed themſelves on the Greeks. As to the poets, it is well known; and Horace ſays it of Mæcenas,

Docte ſermones utriuſque linguæ.

I ſee after that all nations began to have taſte, when they began to cultivate the Greeks, and that they attained different degrees of perfection in proportion to the conſtancy with which they followed theſe models. I ſee that all this is equally true for individuals, and I heſitate no longer

to

to conclude that the Greeks are the ſole models of a ſure and perfect taſte in all the arts*.

If you are curious to enquire into the cauſe of this ſuperiority of the Greeks over all other nations, you will find it eaſily in a concurrence of happy circumſtances. Their government conduced to it; liberty reigned there; their country was full of great characters, and their hiſtory of great events; their religion† contributed to it; it was all poetical and favourable in the higheſt degree to painting,

* Conſidering all the arts collectively, I ſhould give the firſt place to Greece, the ſecond to Italy, the third to France, and the fourth to England.

† There is nothing ſo gay as the Greek Mythology. I know a nation for which it ſeems made on purpoſe.

ſculpture,

ſculpture, &c. &c. Every one knows how much all the arts were encouraged, and the climate was not leſs favourable to them than the Mæcenaſes. Nature there was beautiful; and the organiſation of the natives was uncommonly good *. But it is not neceſſary to look for the cauſes of the ſuperiority of theſe men, either in their religion, or in their government, in the food which they lived on, or in the air that they breathed: Horace ſtudied the nation on the ſpot (the only poſſible way to know a nation to the bottom); and he ſeems to me to

* And is ſo ſtill: theſe men have at this day a ſuperiority in the way they employ themſelves, in commerce: their addreſs even is proverbial; for it is commonly ſaid, "He is as acute as a Greek."

have

have explained it in two words :

Graiis ingenium . . .
. . . . . præter laudem nullius avaris.

The union of theſe two principles is ſufficient to produce the greateſt effects. In a country far different from Greece, genius joined to a thirſt of glory produced a Julius Cæſar; and in another country, oppoſite in every thing to Athens and to Rome, the ſame combination formed a Frederick.

LETTERS X, XI, XII, and XIII, contain advice to a young French poet. They would be uſeleſs in England. I ſhall only tranſlate the concluſion of one of them.

. . . Conſumed by the devouring fire of genius, and panting for fame, you feel it impoſſible not to write; and every inſtant appears to you an age, until

. . . . et te quoque poſſis
Tollere humo, victorque virûm volitare per ora.

I admire the noble paſſion that inflames you; and it is becauſe I intereſt myſelf in that glory which you idolize, that I preſume to give you ſome advice.

When you compoſe, dare to forget the age you live in. Never have for judges but Horace, Boileau, and Longinus; and if your imagination has need of aſſiſtance, place their buſts before your deſk. Aſk their opinions upon each paſſage that you write, and upon each period that you compoſe, and they will never deceive you. But, above all, think of the future: life is ſhort and uncertain. Perhaps the day after the impreſſion of your firſt work, you may enter the grave. Death is ſure: but if your book is good, it will live for ever. Think then only of the future, and avoid thoſe common men who tell you the contrary. This idea will ſublime your thoughts, and teach you to eſtimate every thing according to its real value;

lue; you will then ſubdue your age; you will receive from it the incenſe which you deſire; you will command the admiration of thoſe who run the ſame courſe with you; you will force them to ſtifle the jealouſy which conſumes them; and you will fly from age to age with Homer, Virgil, Shakſpeare, and Corneille, to a glorious and certain immortality.

To give to this immortality a double ſplendour, and that it may do honour to your ſoul, as well as to your genius, whatever be the kind of writing you adopt, ſuſtain with vigour the cauſe of morality. And be perſuaded, that although ſome books may enjoy the fanaticiſm of a moment, the work alone, of which ſound morality is the baſis, will have a reputation that will

increaſe

increaſe from century to century; while that of a work formed on falſe principles will diminiſh from day to day. What a ſublime genius was that of Jean Jaques! How aſtoniſhing a wit was Voltaire! But will the immortality of the author of the *New Heloiſe* be ever worth that of the author of Clariſſa? And where is the man, who, were he to die to-morrow, and had the choice given him, would not rather preſent himſelf before poſterity with *Telemachus* alone in his hand, than with the forty volumes of Monſieur de Voltaire?

LETTER XIV.

ITALY.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of BRISTOL, &c. &c. &c.

Why bound our taſtes?
The man of ſenſe ſhould reunite them all.
Philoſopher of Sans-ſouci.

I Never in my life ſaw any one but your Lordſhip to whom this laſt verſe could be addreſſed with propriety. The number of men who have taſte in the world is incredibly ſmall. It is inconceivable how few taſtes even thoſe have who paſs for having moſt. Mr. Such-a-one, it is ſaid, has a perfect taſte in poetry: converſe with him a quarter

quarter of an hour, you will find that he underſtands tragedies and fugitive poems. Talk to him of Epic or Lyric poetry, he is an utter ſtranger to both. This man notwithſtanding ſhall be a poet; and ſhall make very fine as well as very pretty verſes. Another ſhall be a perfect judge of eloquence, and not underſtand any ſpecies of poetry.

It is the ſame with painters. Nobody underſtands hiſtorical pictures leſs than a landſcape-painter; nor landſcapes leſs than a painter of portraits: and in general I have remarked that artiſts are the men whoſe taſte is moſt limited and leaſt to be depended upon: attached ſolely to a particular kind, they value only that; and eſteeming in that kind only their own

works, they judge all their competitors with harſhneſs and envy.

The people whom I found to have the moſt taſte were men of the world, well born and well bred, who had lively feelings, ſound judgments, and a deſire to acquire knowledge. In this claſs, my Lord, you appear to me to hold the firſt rank. I have heard you talk on poetry, painting, ſculpture, politicks, eloquence, and natural hiſtory, with a knowledge and delicacy which announced the artiſt; but with a nobleneſs and an impartiality which proved that you were not one.

Let no mean ſoul imagine I flatter you. Your talents are known; and if there is a word, which I have ſaid, that is not literally true, the world, as well as yourſelf, will ſee the falſehood; inſtead

inſtead of compliments thoſe are ſarcaſms againſt you, and it is not my intention to be your ſatiriſt.

Mæcenas was maſter of two languages: you are of five. It is then to you, and to thoſe who, like you, know how to value the grand, the beautiful, and the ſublime, that I dare praiſe a nation, which ſeems to have fallen into diſrepute in this age, although ſhe reckons amongſt her admirers a Horace and a Virgil, a Racine, a Boileau, and a Fenelon.

Heaven keep me from copying the ridiculous blaſphemies begotten by Ignorance upon Folly, with which we are overwhelmed every inſtant! Homer, they tell us, has nothing in his favour but his antiquity; and the reading the Iliad fatigues one to death.

Aſk theſe critics a ſingle queſtion, they prove by their firſt anſwer, that it is impoſſible for them to judge him; for they all * allow they do not underſtand his language. To judge the Iliad on a Tranſlation, or the Apollo on a print—Speak for them all you who have meditated entire days in the *Cortile de Belvedere*, and who, like Horace, have more than once † read Homer in the language in which he wrote.

But who are thoſe who condemn Homer? Men who do not tranſport

* It is very rare to meet a man in France that underſtands Greek; when a Frenchman puſhed me hard in an argument, I always knocked him down with,

Τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς.

† Trojani belli ſcriptorem, maxime Lolli,
Dum tu declamas Romæ, Præneſte *re*legi.

- themſelves

themſelves either into his age or his country, and who know nothing about his religion. Men petrified * by underſtanding, but who have neither imagination nor feeling; and who are ignorant that this poet was ſung by heart by all the different claſſes of a nation who had the moſt acute underſtandings, the moſt poliſhed imaginations, and the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility of any people that ever exiſted.

Homer is the prince † of poets and of poetry. His Iliad is a diamond which has a thouſand ſides, and all of

* This word expreſſes my meaning well; men grown hardened and cold by the force of reaſon.

† Mark, Reader, I only ſaid *Prince*; I kept *King* (in petto) for Shakeſpear.

them equally brilliant and ſolid. It is an inexhauſtible mine of riches; and Virgil and Taſſo are but ſucceſsful plunderers. In it are found the ſources of every ſpecies of beauty and of grace. In it are to be found the majeſtic, the terrible, the pathetic, and the ſublime. Homer is the ſun; Virgil ſhines with a mild, (I had almoſt ſaid) pale light, which he borrows from him. Homer is a model of eloquence; every one knows how much Cicero ſtudied him. Homer has created painters and ſculptors; and one of the fineſt ornaments of the Vatican, the Jupiter of Phidias, is of his invention. But why ſpeak the praiſes of Homer? Horace has praiſed him; Boileau has praiſed him: the

Æneid,

Æneid, and the Jeruſalem Delivered, praiſe him from beginning to end *.

Thoſe critics condemn him becauſe they ſay he wants ſenſe and reaſon; and he appears to them to want reaſon and ſenſe, becauſe they do not know that the Greek Allegories (which they call chimæras and marvellous) were all founded upon reaſon and truth; and that they contained the fineſt morality, which made Horace ſay, that Homer taught † philoſophy better than many others who were philoſophers by profeſſion.

If the admiration of Virgil for this Father of Poetry, proved by a conti-

* Theſe ideas are rather old in London: they were very new laſt winter at Paris.

† Qui quid ſit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius ac melius Chryſippo & Crantore dicit.

nual

nual imitation, makes no effect on them; if the judgment of Horace makes none;

Non ſi *priores* Mæonius tenet
Sedes Homerus;

if they deſpiſe the ſuffrage of Dante;

Quegli è Omero Poeta *ſovrano* . . . .
. . . . Signor dell' altiſſimo canto,
Che ſovra gli altri, come Aquila, vola:

If they are inſenſible to the enthuſiaſm of Longinus for him;

" Thoſe only who have ſublime and ſolid thoughts can make elevated diſcourſes; and in this part Homer chiefly excels, whoſe thoughts are all ſublime, as may be ſeen in the Deſcription of the Goddeſs Diſcord, who has, ſays he, her head in the ſkies and her feet upon earth; for it may be ſaid, that that grandeur which he gives her, is leſs the meaſure of Diſcord, than of the capacity and elevation of Homer's genius." . . . " To Homer, that is, to him who had already received the applauſes of the whole world."

And

And in another place, ſpeaking of the number of men who were imitators of Homer, he ſays,

"Plato, however, is he who has imitated him moſt; for he has drawn from this poet, as from a living ſpring, from which he has turned an infinite number of rivulets."

Treatiſe on the Sublime.

If the authority of Boileau is alſo without foundation;

On diroit que pour plaire inſtruit par la nature,
Homere ait à Venus dérobé ſa ceinture;
Son livre eſt d'agrémens un fertile tréſor,
Tout ce qu'il a touché ſe convertit en or.

If, I ſay, the teſtimonies of philoſophers, of poets, and of critics, ſuch as Plato, Pope, Boileau, Horace, Longinus, Dante, and Virgil, do not perſuade them, we have only to weep with Heraclitus for the weakneſs of mankind,

mankind, or laugh with the philoſopher of Abdera at their fooliſh and ridiculous pride.

I expect nothing leſs than to make proſelytes; but, perſuaded that the Greeks are the only pure ſource to form youth, I would wiſh to ſilence thoſe ignorant detractors, who are capable of impoſing upon young and docile minds, and conſequently of hurting eſſentially the progreſs of the arts.

The Italians have nothing which belongs properly to them, except muſic, and colouring in painting. For all the other parts of this art, compoſition, drawing, the art of grouping, attitudes, mouvement, expreſſion, contraſte, drapery, character, and grace*;

* There is not a word to be taken away.

Raphael took them all from the ancient ſtatues and bas-reliefs.

Let not young people imagine I wiſh to miſlead them, or that I offer them here only declamation. I entreat them to conſult men of ſenſe, who have ſeen the Greek works, and who have read their authors in their own language; and then if any man can produce a tragedy ſuperior to the Oedipus of Sophocles; a poem of any kind equal to the Iliad; an orator like Demoſthenes*; a divinity in marble as good as the Belvedere Apol-

* In the judgment even of a Roman, the Greeks were the greateſt orators; "*Sed mihi multa legenti, multa audienti conſtabat*, facundiâ Græcos, *gloriâ belli Gallos ante Romanos fuiſſe.*"

Salluſt, Bell. Cat.

Virgil was of the ſame opinion:

Orabunt cauſas melius.

lo;

lo; the ſublime in ſculpture attained as it is in the Laocoon; expreſſions as true and animated as thoſe of the fighting and dying Gladiators; ſuch fine and light drapery * as that of the Flora; an elegance and a ſymmetry equal to that of the Antinous; or a female beauty as perfect as the Venus of Medici; if, I ſay, any man can ſhew me one of theſe works *equalled*, I ſacrifice the Greeks, and I recommend in their place the Goths and the Dutch.

If there be any juſtneſs in theſe ideas, my Lord, I owe it to you; and

* Qui ne s'y colle point, mais en ſuive la grace,
Et ſans la ſerrer trop, la careſſe & l'embraſſe.
Moliere, Gloire du dôme du Val-de-Grace.

I am

I am proud to acknowledge that ſuch a *ſubtilis veterum judex*, and ſuch an *elegans formarum æſtimator*, thought me worthy to be enlightened by him.

LETTER XV.

ITALY.

THE *Lago maggiore* at the foot of the Alps, in the Milaneſe, has two iſlands which are called the *Iſola bella* and the *Iſola madre:* the firſt is ſmall and pretty; the other large and irregular. Situated in the middle of a little ſea, and ſurrounded by very high mountains, they have nearly the ſame advantages of views from without. As to the interior, it is different. The *Iſola bella*, which belongs to the Prince Borromée, has a magnificent palace with four fronts, each of which commands different

proſpects,

proſpects, but all intereſting and all beautiful. A bold terrace at the end of the garden, which commands the lake, and which is filled with orange-trees, ſhrubs, and ſtatues, is one of the chief ornaments of this delightful iſland. But what pleaſed me the moſt were the grottoes, which are paved with Moſaic, and which hang over the lake. They are an abode (a poet would ſay) worthy of Neptune, when, fatigued with the tumult of the ſea, he ſeeks a peaceful and cool aſylum from the heats of a ſcorching ſummer. The lake is filled with young peaſants of both ſexes, who catch fiſh. Theſe grottoes offer them a ſoft retreat after their labours, and invite them to come to ſolace their

hearts, and intermingle their ſighs in thoſe ſecret and myſterious labyrinths.

The *Iſola madre* is more rural. As I was walking in one of its woods, Italian ſounds ſtruck my ear. I approached, and through a hedge I ſaw a group of young girls ſinging in chorus as they were working in a meadow. I never heard a ſweeter concert. A real joy animated their ſong; it was their hearts that ſung, and mine beat in uniſon. O pure and ſimple pleaſures of Nature, how you annihilate the imitations of art! How faint and inſipid are all her efforts compared with you! Do I hear, cried I, the voice of enchantreſſes? and do the nymphs of Armida really exiſt? But let us loſe the ideas of Armida and of enchantment; and let

us rather exclaim with the ſimple, the true Virgil;

O fortunatos nimium ſua ſi bona norint
Agricolas!
(O happy if they knew their happy ſtate
The ſwains!)

And here let us not miſtake; let us not imagine that Virgil meant to ſpeak of peaſants in general; he ſpeaks only of the peaſants of Italy; and this ſenſe at that inſtant engraved itſelf on my mind. Let us paſs the limits of this happy climate, the difference is felt the inſtant you paſs the Alps. But let us extend our views a little farther, and contemplate the labourers of the regions of the North.

Infortunatos nimium ſua ſi mala norint
(Too wretched if they knew their wretched
ſtate)

Theſe miſerable countrymen! Thick fogs, dark ſuns, and an ungrateful ſoil, are their horrid portion. Ignorant of all the enjoyments of more fortunate countries, they ſcarcely vegetate, and have nothing to ſolace their unhappy lot but the ſad conſolation of a perfect inſenſibility.

Do you blame me, my dear friend, for too often quitting my ſubject? I write without art, and preſent you a mixture of emotions and ideas in the ſame diſorder in which they offered themſelves to me. To return then to the iſlands: they are both extremely beautiful; but one is dreſſed, and the other is wild. They ſet each other off mutually, and conſpire together to adorn this ſuperb baſon. I think a Frenchman would

prefer the *pretty iſland*; an Engliſh-man, I believe, would be better pleaſed with the rural one *.

* Reader, which do you prefer, the garden of the Luxembourg, or that of the Tuilleries?

LETTER XVI.

GENEVA.

THEY told me here that all the girls were chaſte; and I believed them, for I am naturally a very credulous man. Here are ſome reaſons which might tempt a traveller leſs ſimple than myſelf to ſuſpect the contrary. There is no play-houſe, nor any public amuſement in the city of Geneva; and reading is the only reſource againſt *ennui*. In conſequence of this, a number of bookſellers hire books by the month at a very low price. The firſt acquaintance I generally make in a town is that of a bookſeller;

bookſeller; and during half an hour that I was talking with one the day after my arrival here, in came three girls, one after another, to hire the *New Heloiſe*. Pray, ſaid I to the bookſeller, what is the general reading of this country? Young people, ſays he, like books with fine ſentiments; women a little mature prefer thoſe which are light and brilliant. He appeared to me to have unfolded his nation by this trait; the girls all enamoured of Rouſſeau; the women all admirers of Voltaire. Yes, thought I, the thing is clear; they begin by imitating Eloiſa; and when their St. Preux forſake them, or the devil begins to frighten them, they read Voltaire to give them courage and ſpirits. Well, Sir, not at all; I gueſſed like a

fool. The girls are all virtuous; there never was one ſuſpected; and what makes this miracle ſtill more aſtoniſhing is, they have leave to go out by themſelves in the morning, and they avail themſelves of it every day.

The Geneveſe thinks that he is ſomewhat like the ancient Roman; as a Petty Prince in Germany thinks that he reſembles Lewis the Fourteenth.

The tradeſman of this country is of all men he who impoſed upon me the moſt; and he cheats with an inſolence equal to his baſeneſs.

I ſaw few people of the firſt claſs; but thoſe I did ſee appeared to me amiable, ſenſible, and well informed. The men in general wiſh to paſs for wits, the women for free-thinkers.

LETTER XVII.

LAUSANNE.

EVERY body is ſeldom in the right; but every body is in the right in ſaying, the Swiſs are good people. Their country is certainly neither the favourite reſidence of genius nor of taſte; but you will no where ſee more ſenſible men, nor more ſerene foreheads.

A thouſand authors have written on the government, and on the natural beauties of this country; and for this reaſon I ſhall not ſay any thing of them.

You are not miſtaken, Sir, in your opinion about the beauties of Switzerland;

zerland; but you are miſtaken in your opinion of an Engliſh beauty. The features Greek, the complexion Engliſh, the throat Italian; nothing, you ſay, can be ſuperior to that. I aſk your pardon; her underſtanding is ſuperior to her beauty; and the ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition is ſuperior to her underſtanding. But you ought to have ſeen Lady Louiſa Hervey longer than you did, to know the merits ſhe poſſeſſes. The beauties of her perſon, and the charms of her voice, ought to have enchanted you; but if you had ſeen her longer, you would have given only the ſecond place to her accompliſhments and to her attractions.

Her natural timidity gives her at firſt an air of reſerve, and hinders her

her from ſhewing her true value. It is not till after an acquaintance of ſome time, when ſhe will venture to unfold herſelf, that you will diſcover a generoſity and delicacy of ſentiment, in which you will diſtinguiſh her father and mother, and a juſtneſs of obſervation and of reaſoning that I have not ſeen at that age but in her alone.

She delighted a very large company here laſt night at a concert, by ſinging that charming air of Aprile,

Pur nel ſonno almen talora, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

STRASBURGH.

IF it had been my object to have made a large book, I could have made it without much trouble. They have made a larger book than this on the Cathedral of this city.

The idea which intereſted me the moſt here, was a compariſon of the *preſent* ſtate of ſculpture in France and Italy. I riſk nothing in ſaying that Italy has not produced for fifty years paſt *ſo* fine a monument as the Mauſoleum of Marſhal Saxe *.

* By Pigal.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

BERLIN.

THE Pruſſian dominions contained only one object for me; that object was the king. All my obſervations, all my reſearches, tended ſolely to this point; and in my ſecond journey I made no new diſcovery on that ſubject. I was only confirmed in my former ideas. His majeſty continued to eſteem the queen, and to be eſteemed by her; to love his brothers, his ſiſters, humanity, and juſtice; to ſeek for glory by protecting the weak; to cultivate letters, and to diſtinguiſh thoſe who love them;

them; to be adored by his ſubjects, dreaded by the moſt formidable powers, and to render himſelf worthy of the admiration of his age and of poſterity.

The peace of Teſchen alone, in which he ſhewed himſelf the diſintereſted protector of—but I forbear; the firſt time I paſſed through his kingdom, he did not ſpeak to me *; I had not then even the feeble intereſt of the ſelf-love of an author flattered to praiſe this Monarch: the purity of my elogium could not then be ſuſpected. In my ſecond viſit His Majeſty received me with graciouſneſs, and ſaid to me things too flattering for me to dare to repeat them. For

* See Vol. I. Let. III.

theſe reaſons I ſhall ſpeak no more of him; and I ſhall finiſh my letter with an anſwer which I received from a Saxon peaſant. "Well, my good "friend, ſaid I to him, do you not "love the King of Pruſſia as much "to-day as you hated him in the laſt "war? I never hated him, ſaid he; "the peaſants had no reaſon to hate "him *. He gave orders to his troops

"to

* I ſaid in the firſt Letter of my other volume, ſpeaking of the King of Pruſſia, "With his ſubjects he is the moſt juſt of ſovereigns." See how he ſpeaks in his decree on the affair of the Miller Arnoll, which happened ſince the printing of that book.

"This ſentence is moſt highly unjuſt; it is "abſolutely and entirely contrary to the pater-"nal intentions of his Majeſty, who would have "ſtrict and ſpeedy juſtice done to every one "whether noble or ignoble, rich or poor, with-

"out

" to direct all their attacks againſt
" the great, and to do the leaſt harm
" poſſible to the poor."

" out diſtinction of perſon or of rank. His
" Majeſty therefore, by degrading the judges,
" makes a great example, on occaſion of the
" unjuſt ſentence paſſed againſt the Miller Ar-
" noll, in order that all the Colleges of Juſtice
" in his provinces may no more commit like acts
" of injuſtice; for they ought to know that the
" loweſt peaſant, and even a beggar, are men
" as well as His Majeſty."

LET-

LETTER XX.

BERLIN.

THE Count de Peltzer, an officer in the Pruſſian ſervice, was the only ſon of a widow near ſixty years old. He was handſome, brave to an exceſs, and deeply in love with Mademoiſelle de Benſkow. She was in her eighteenth year, gentle, pretty, and born with an extreme ſenſibility. Her lover, juſt turned of twenty, was loved with a paſſion equal to his own, and the day was fixed to make them happy. It was the 20th of June, 1778.

The Pruſſian troops are always ready to take the field; and the 17th of June, at ten o'clock at night, the count's regiment received orders to march at midnight for Sileſia. He was at Berlin, and his miſtreſs at a country-houſe four leagues from the town. He ſet off conſequently without ſeeing her; and he wrote to her from the firſt place where he ſtopped, that it was impoſſible for him to live without her; that it was eſſential to his happineſs that ſhe ſhould follow him immediately, and that they ſhould be married in Sileſia. He wrote at the ſame time to her brother, who was his moſt intimate friend, to plead his cauſe with her parents. She ſet out then accompanied by this brother, and by her lover's mother. Never did

the ſands of Brandenbourg appear ſo heavy as to this charming girl; but at length the journey ended, and ſhe arrived at the town of Herſtadt; it was in the morning, and "Never," ſaid her brother to me, "did my eyes "ſee a woman lovelier than my ſiſter: "the exerciſe of the journey had "added to her bloom, and her eyes "painted what paſſed in her heart." But, O human proſpects! how deceitful are you! How near often is the moment of wretchedneſs to the moment of felicity! The carriage is ſtopped to let paſs ſome ſoldiers, who, advancing with ſlow ſteps, bore in their arms a wounded officer. The tender heart of the young lady was affected at the ſight: ſhe little ſuſpected that it was her lover.

Some Auſtrian foragers had approached this town, and the young Count went out to repulſe them. Burning to diſtinguiſh himſelf, he ruſhed with ardour before his troop, and fell the victim of his unhappy impetuoſity.

To deſcribe to you the ſituation of this unfortunate young woman, would be to inſult at once your heart and your imagination. Her lover is placed in his bed; his mother is at his feet, and his miſtreſs holds his hand. "O Charlotte," cried he, opening a dying eye—he wanted to ſpeak; but his voice broke, and he melted into tears. His tone had pierced the ſoul of his miſtreſs; ſhe loſt her reaſon, and, "No, I will not ſurvive you," cried ſhe, quite frantic, and ſeizing a

ſword.

ſword. They diſarmed her; and he made a ſign with his hand that they ſhould bring her to his bed-ſide. She came; he graſped her arm; and after two painful efforts to ſpeak, he ſays with a ſob, "Live, my Char-" lotte, to comfort my mother," and expires.

P. S. I found this hiſtory ſo affecting, that it appeared to me to merit a place in my collection; and I believe that every feeling reader will thank me for it. I forgot to tell you, that, in the troop which made that ſally, there were but two men wounded, and he alone killed. When I paſſed through Berlin, in July, 1779, the unfortunate lady had not recovered her ſenſes.

LETTER XXI.

GERMANY.

BY Jupiter, my good friend, you do not ſpare me: however, continue to write to me, and to aſk me queſtions: your letters give me pleaſure, for they make me think. You aſk me, what is the idea that I have formed to myſelf of the Empreſs Queen? That ſhe is the mirror of all virtues, and of all good qualities. But perhaps ſhe will ſee theſe letters: that thought ſtops me; I fear that her modeſty will be wounded by her panegyric; and I will tell you, at my return,

return, of this great Princeſs all that I keep now in a reſpectful ſilence.

Whether the Emperor and the Prince Royal of Pruſſia are great men? The queſtion is beyond my reach. The courtiers of Vienna and Berlin will tell you that they are; but princes are like canary-birds: the bird-ſellers praiſe their beauty, affirm that they will ſing well, and one cannot tell if the bird-ſellers have ſpoken truth or not, till the canary-birds ſing or die. The private man, the coſmopolite, the ſcholar, the philoſopher, the tradeſman, and the wit, all judge princes in their own way. Hiſtory ratifies the judgment when the judges are rotted with the heroes.

You wiſh to know all that I think of the diplomatic body, courtiers,

chamberlains, maids of honour, Prince Kaunitz, and the art of pleaſing. All that I think would make a long letter: I will give you the quinteſſence of my ideas on theſe ſubjects in few words.

A courtier always carries about him two boxes; one filled with incenſe, the other with poiſon: he reads continually in the eyes of his maſter; and he opens one or the other of theſe boxes, according to the ſentence which he has read in that book.

A Lady of honour is a female courtier. The ſtate pays her for tiring herſelf to death, ſimpering, in the company of a princeſs, who often is only come into the world becauſe Providence has ſome impenetrable reaſons.

reaſons. In proportion to the weakneſs of the ſex, this female courtier carries a box of ſweetmeats, and a box of pins, and ſhe gives you ſugar-plumbs, or pricks you, according to the look more or leſs favourable of the perſon whoſe *Inſeparable* ſhe is, and whoſe *ennui* ſhe ſupports for money.

The court ſends ambaſſadors of three ſorts; ſome to negotiate affairs of ſtate, to protect their nation, to inform it of the dangers with which it is threatened. She chuſes theſe men among thoſe who know what a man is, what a ſociety is which forms a nation, and what is the force which that nation may dread. Theſe are philoſophers, attentive calculators, geniuſes who ſee through the maſk which deceives the *mannikin*, and who juggle

juggle from the courtier the box which he means to ſecret.

The ſecond ſort of ambaſſadors is choſen among the great of a country; they are men of whom the court wants to get rid, or whoſe vanity it wiſhes to gratify. Theſe people give good dinners, do not ſee the ſecretary behind them who does the buſineſs, and think they have peformed a fine operation when they have bought from a clerk for a hundred thouſand crowns a falſe or uſeleſs piece. Theſe are beings who ſend a courier extraordinary when they have paſſed through a door before the ambaſſador of the king their neighbour; and when the political fire lurks under the aſhes, when their nation is really in danger, and when the ſecretary informs them

of

of it, their firſt idea is to ſend away their equipages.

The third claſs are reſidents and envoys, who have by heart the law of nations, the peace of Weſtphalia, and the Golden Bull. They muſt have a prodigious quantity of nugatory knowledge. As theſe men know a great deal in point of quantity, they conſider others, who know more in reſpect of the quality of knowledge, as ignorant. That gives them an air of importance, a manner of expreſsing themſelves, and a kind of heavy and dull activity, which renders them inſupportable in company, but very uſeful to the plough to which they are harneſſed. I adviſe you to converſe with the firſt, to eat with the ſecond, and to fly the third.

If,

If, after having had a converſation with the King of Pruſſia, the Earl of Briſtol, or Monſieur de Buffon, about the monſters of the ocean, volcanoes, and man, one ſhould aſk me, how fleas are formed? I ſhould anſwer, *de minimis non curat Prætor*; and I give you the ſame anſwer to your queſtion about chamberlains. I have talked to you about kings and ambaſſadors; but after that to weigh the diſmal and Aulic nothingneſs of a chamberlain *, would be to talk after

* As the King of Pruſſia was paſſing through his great hall at Sans-Souci, with one of his generals, "General," ſays he, "you ſhall dine "here in a few days with three hundred cham- "berlains." "Sire, I did not think you had "ſo many." "I do not mean thoſe animals "who wear gold keys, but of my brave cham- "berlains who will open for me the gates of "Sileſia."

an

an account of a curious menagery of the inhabitants of a common court-yard.

As to Prince Kaunitz, it is different. Nature has been prodigal to him. His genius is vaſt, his judgment ſound, and an excellent memory, which has made him retain all that he has ſeen, read, and heard, has ſupplied the place of thoſe laborious ſtudies that another man is obliged to make before he can collect, keep, and claſs a number of things in his head. Beſides this, he has always the happineſs to be cool; and it may be ſaid that our age has not produced a greater politician than him, nor nature a man more proper for the ſtation that he fills. Every individual has his faults in the ſame proportion as his good qualities;

qualities; and chance has determined that thoſe of Prince Kaunitz ſhould have no influence upon the kind of affairs which his great political genius manages with amazing eaſe. But his coolneſs, which has been ſo uſeful to him in Auſtria, at the head of a powerful and formed ſtate, of an abſolute monarchy, and of a country which has great intereſts without ever having great revolutions, would have kept him in the greateſt mediocrity in a republick, and eſpecially in a country ſubject to revolutions, where warm fiery ſpirits, quick as lightning and firm as adamant, have the excluſive privilege of doing great things. If Prince Kaunitz had been bred a watch-maker, he would have made the beſt watches in the world; if he had

had been a mariner in the fifteenth century, he would never have diſcovered America. Great, but not univerſal, he ought to have been born in Auſtria, and govern that particular country to attain the ſublime as he has done. Cicero, Julius Cæſar, and Jean Jaques, would have been great men in all ages from Paris to Pekin.

To pleaſe is a difficult talent for one who is above the common run of mankind. It is innate in thoſe who do not hurt the ſelf-love of the little, and who ſerve to ſet off a ſuperior character. However, this difficult art is to be learned: to let thoſe who have not in reality better parts than ourſelves believe they have much better; few reſiſt that bait. To ſay always, *You are in the right, very true, I think*

as

as you do, you make an excellent thought come into my head; never to utter a ſarcaſm; never to point out the faults or follies of others, and never to decide on any thing; but to ſay at moſt, *I ſhould think that:* this is in few words all that conſtitutes this art of pleaſing: but it is difficult for a man to obſerve this regimen, and to keep himſelf in the hall, when he knows he deſerves a place in the parlour.

When a man has genius, or any thing ſtriking in his character, he will pleaſe him who has the like, for the ſame reaſon that brings together merchants at the Exchange Coffee-Houſe, officers at the Tilt-Yard, and artiſts in a gallery of pictures. The man whom you mention has no genius, no caprice, no warmth; but he

has preciſely the degree of underſtanding that is neceſſary not to be rejected as a fool by men of parts, and not to wound the ſelf-love of ordinary men. He is himſelf an ordinary man, ſafe in his commerce, and mild in his behaviour; almoſt always ſatisfied with the place he is in, and never deſiring to be any where elſe. Can this man diſpleaſe? Money, a good cook, and an embroidered coat, very gallant and perfectly diſcreet. If it were poſſible for ſuch men to have genius, and the talent to conceal it, they would attain every thing.

P. S. You have every day a dinner and a ſupper in the little courts * in Germany.

* The court of Brunſwick is one of the moſt

Germany. I cannot ſay ſo much of the great ones. I had only one ſupper at a *Kamerfeſt*, during the carnival at the court of Vienna; and only one dinner at Verſailles, the day I had the honour of being preſented. The King of Pruſſia gives neither dinners nor ſuppers.

agreeable. The Reigning Dutcheſs, ſiſter to the King of Pruſſia, has, of all the women I ever ſaw (after Lady Briſtol) the moſt ſolid and moſt cultivated underſtanding.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

SENLIS.

NO man ever left Paris in good ſpirits; either he has loſt his health or his money; or he has left attachments which cannot eaſily be replaced in other countries, or intereſting acquaintance whom it is impoſſible to quit without regret. Whatever is the reaſon of it, one is always melancholy leaving Paris.

On my arrival at Senlis, at my return from Germany, I ſaw a genteel young man walking up and down before the gate of the inn. I addreſſed him. You ſeem, Sir, to come from Paris?

He did come from Paris, and was returning to his own country, to Peterſburg. Pray, Sir, did you ſtay long at Paris? Two years. And what do you ſay of that country of delights? Of aſſaſſinating delights? replied he. Monteſquieu ſays, that to make a Ruſſian feel, you muſt flay him; and I thought in my own mind, that this one muſt have been well flayed *. How did you find the men? Fulſome. The women? Dear. The wits? Gluttons. But why, ſays he, make uſe of ſuch gentle terms? I have been robbed, betrayed, maſſacred. This traveller's heart, ſaid I to myſelf, is full; and knowing that a Ruſſian

* This is a *jeu de mots* in the original; as, *ecorché* ſignifies both *flayed* and *plundered.*

and

and a German talk better after a meal than before it, I invited him to ſupper, and he accepted it.

Towards the end of the ſupper:

Ruſſian. You have been at Paris then?

Engliſhman. A year.

R. Did you know any women there?

E. Yes; I knew a great many modeſt women; and I never was happier than in their company.

R. What, you think the French women amiable?

E. More amiable and more intereſting than the women of any other foreign country I have ſeen.

R. Sir, you have ſeen them ill. They are a ſet of wicked, bawling, peeviſh wretches; witty in gewgaws,

not a grain of common ſenſe, and ſo perfidious—

(I knew very well that he would grow eloquent after ſupper; but what blaſphemies!—Take quickly for the antidote;

O woman, lovely woman, Nature made you
To temper man; we had been brutes without you:
Angels are painted fair to look like you;
There's in you all that we believe of Heaven,
Amazing brightneſs, purity, and truth,
Eternal joys, and everlaſting love.

Otway.)

not a grain of common ſenſe, and ſo perfidious—

E. They treated you ill?

R. Treated me ill! my firſt miſtreſs made a conqueſt of me ten days after my arrival at a maſquerade. She won me by a ſingle ſpeech; "You "are charming." I was then nineteen; ſhe was pretty; and this was the

the firſt time in my life that a pretty woman had ſaid thoſe words to me. When a man ſays to a modeſt woman once, "I love you," the devil repeats it to her a hundred times. The devil repeated in my ear a thouſand times that I was charming; and on this ground I fell deſperately in love. However, I quitted this woman in a ſhort time, becauſe, beſide that ſhe was very fooliſh and very tireſome, I felt the neceſſity of going out of her hands to go into thoſe of a ſurgeon.

When I mixed with the great world, I related the ſucceſs of this amour; and they told me for conſolation, that, beſide my having been an inſipid dupe, I had diſhonoured myſelf by an attachment to a woman who did not belong to any of the

theatres. I determined inſtantly to repair this fault, and I connected myſelf immediately with a dancing-girl of the opera. She had the prettieſt leg in Paris; a warm Provençal, lively, gay, and cutting capers from morning till night. She had ſo many calls on me, I mean for louis-d'ors, that ſhe made me often remember the ſaying of Marſhal Villars to Lewis the Fourteenth: ſhe wanted but three things, money, money, money. There was no end to her caprices; and, among others, I began to ſuſpect that ſhe had one for my valet-de-chambre; but ſhe ſoon cured me of this jealouſy; for one evening, going into her room, I found her in the arms of a young French officer. I demanded ſatisfaction of him on the inſtant;

inſtant; and he gave me a thruſt here, which put me in the hands of another ſurgeon for three months.

I returned into the gay world, fully determined to be ſage for the future; but they laughed at my ſufferings; aſſured me that I was forming aſtoniſhingly; that I ſhould ſhine amazingly on my return into my own country, even by reciting the diſaſters that befel me; that there were no roſes without thorns. — Ah! why had I not a friend to tell me, that the roſes wither, and that the thorns remain—

E.—That the roſes only bloom in the ſpring of life, and that the thorns continue during the whole winter?

R. Being then conſtantly in the temple of * wantonneſs, I once more

* At the Green-room of the Opera.

yielded,

yielded, and I took a third miſtreſs. For my misfortune, ſhe ſung like an angel. If the other had a taper leg, this one's arms were perfect; and when ſhe threw them open to embrace me, ſinging,

O toi le ſeul objet que mon cœur ait au monde,

(O thou ſole object of my heart's deſire,)

I thought I ſhould expire with pleaſure. She was at once a Siren and a Circe; a dying eye, a beautiful ſkin, an enchanting ſweetneſs, and an air of modeſty that would have deceived Ulyſſes. Her mother had been a dancer, and Miſs was born behind the ſcenes; and from her infancy had learned to dance, to ſing, to receive her mama's viſitors, and to be preſent

at

at their ſuppers. She had every thing in her favour; birth, education, example, precept, experience, and I was in my twentieth year.

As ſhe had been regularly bred, ſhe applied herſelf ſeriouſly to ruin me. The ſummit of art is to conceal art, and my miſtreſs had attained this laſt degree of perfection. All her artifices were imperceptible, and it is only by reflecting on them in my melancholy retreat theſe eight months paſt, that I have diſcovered them. She ſaw that I was diſtruſtful, and ſhe never praiſed me. Did I look as if I thought I had ſaid ſomething clever? She applauded it only by a ſcarce-perceivable ſmile, which gave a brightneſs to her eye, and made her appear at once beautiful and ſincere.

All

All my taſtes were conſulted and anticipated. It was a continual round of gaiety, agreeableneſs, and variety; public places, ſuppers of girls and of wits, concerts, cards — She ſeemed to think only of me, and this appearance was real.

The mother did not fail to praiſe daily the merits of her daughter; nor to ſeaſon her panegyric with the bittereſt ſarcaſms againſt her ſiſters of the opera. " My Sophy," ſaid ſhe, " is not like thoſe wretched women " that you ſee, who are all --- who " . . . . . " . . . . . " . . . . She is diſcreet " and gentle, and, thank God, edu- " cated in the right way." I am perſuaded that ſhe was diſcreet, for ſhe

ſhe poſſeſſed perfectly the genius of her trade, and thought ſolely of making her fortune.

E. She coſt you then a great deal of money?

R. This it was that began to embarraſs me. I had already got into debt, for I no longer dared to aſk money of my father, who had complained heavily of my extravagance, and threatened to ſend me no more ſupplies. I mentioned this one day to my miſtreſs; "What ſignifies that?" replied ſhe, "I have enough for us "both;" and ſaying theſe words, ſhe went to her deſk with a grace that I ſhall never forget, and took out of it a purſe of a hundred Louis, which ſhe put into my hand, giving me at the ſame time a moſt delicious kiſs.

E. Timeo

E. Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.

(I fear a Girl and a Greek when they make preſents.)

R. I had forgot Virgil; my miſtreſs had found me other ſtudies; I was affected by her behaviour and her kiſs, and theſe words,

Travaillons, Travaillons gaiment,
Et l'amour tiendra lieu d'argent *,

ſung with an expreſſion that I cannot deſcribe, appeared to me to contain ſo delicious a ſentiment, and ſo juſt reaſoning, that I thought no more either of my father or my creditors.

The Provençal ruined me without thinking of any thing but her pleaſures. This Pariſian had no caprices,

* Let us labour gaily, and Love will ſupply the place of money.

and

and had but one marked paſſion; that was avarice. I gave her willingly, becauſe ſhe never aſked any thing, but let all appear the effect of my liberality. Her mother, indeed, praiſed generoſity a good deal. She had even reduced the four cardinal virtues to this ſingle one; and at Chriſtmas ſhe proved to me that I ought to give her daughter a diamond necklace, for her new-year's gift. This was a ſerious affair; the price was thirty thouſand livres. Milord ——, ſhe told me, had given one to his miſtreſs, who received three or four other men every day. The German baron that I knew had alſo commanded one for his; *a creature without ſentiment*, of a deplorable conduct; but who, however, deſerved to be paid by her lover,

lover, becauſe he killed her with *ennui*. At length ſhe ſhewed me, that the honour of Ruſſia was concerned in it. I could not reſiſt this argument, and I gave her the necklace without paying for it.

I continued to *labour gaily* according to the maxim of my tender fair one, when my father — but, perhaps, I tire you —

E. No, ſir, you intereſt me much.

R. I have only a word to add: my father not chuſing any longer to ſupport my extravagance, ceaſed to ſupply me with money; and when it was clear that I had no more reſources, the maſk fell off, the proſtitute remained, and the enchantreſs became a fury. After a moſt violent ſcene, of which I ſpare you the particulars, ſhe ſhut the

door in my face; and I have learned ſince, that, to get completely rid of me, ſhe adviſed the jeweller, who furniſhed the necklace, to have me put in priſon; and I am juſt now come out of *Fort l'Evéque*, where I remained eight months.

LETTER XXIII.

SENLIS.

IT were to be wiſhed that there was a victim of this ſort at all the gates of Paris, to make a lively impreſſion on young travellers, and to inform them of the dangers they are going to encounter: or rather it were to be wiſhed, that ſenſeleſs fathers did not expoſe their ſons, before the age of reaſon, to dangers from which they cannot eſcape but by a miracle.

Il faut au voyageur un but & des talens,

(A traveller ſhould have a view and talents,)

is a good line of the King of Pruſſia; good, becauſe it contains a uſeful and profound

profound meaning; becauſe it marks the limits between the perſons calculated to profit by travelling, and thoſe deſtined by nature to ſtay at home. This Ruſſian neither wanted ſenſe nor education; but he had no view in leaving his country, except to *amuſe himſelf*, a term at Paris ſynonymous to that of *ruining himſelf*.

Nothing is ſo uſeful as travelling to thoſe who know how to profit by it. Nature is ſeen in all her ſhades, and in all her extremes. If the mind of the traveller be virtuous, it will be confirmed in the love of virtue, and in the abhorrence of vice; becauſe he will every where ſee that virtue is eſteemed even by the perſons who practiſe it the leaſt. If the traveller has the ſeeds of one or of ſeveral ta-

lents, he will find men of the firſt merit in every line, who will think it a pleaſure to encourage and unfold thoſe ſeeds, and to communicate knowledge acquired by years of labour to a modeſt and virtuous young man who looks for information. He will ſee the mutual needs men have of each other; he will find himſelf in embarraſſments where he will want aſſiſtance, and he will learn to feel for the ſufferings of others, and to enjoy the delight that ariſes from relieving them. In a word, his underſtanding will be enriched, his imagination fertiliſed, and, if nature has given him a feeling and elevated ſoul, that elevation and that ſenſibility will be equally encreaſed.

The

The traveller has, beſides, the advantage of making continual compariſons, which ſtrengthen his judgment extremely; and never loſing ſight of his country, even in the moſt diſtant regions, he will ſeek ideas which may be uſeful to his countrymen, with the intention of bringing them home *. If he be an inhabitant of the North, where the rigours of the climate and other cauſes give a roughneſs to the outſide of a man, who poſſibly may have a tender heart, he will learn to value the charms of mildneſs, and to feel how delightful it is to be beloved as well as eſteemed.

He will alſo learn to claſs mankind; and to ſet on each claſs its proper va-

* I believe I found one which I ſhall mention on a future day.

lue. After a great deal of experience, compariſons, and reflections, the firſt* claſs,

* I expect nothing from any King; and, if it were for my intereſt, I ſhould not praiſe any of them at the expence of truth. Let me then be allowed to ſay, for the honour of the age, that there is not one in Europe whoſe heart is bad; but there are two who are diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, the King of Sardinia, and the King of Pruſſia. I ſpeak of what I ſaw, and of what I know. The day before I was preſented to the King of Sardinia, I went to ſee him go to maſs. I ſaw with ſurpriſe five or ſix poor people in the gallery through which he was to paſs. I aſked why the guards ſuffered them to be there: I was anſwered, that they were waiting for the King. I ſaw each of them preſent a paper to him, which his Majeſty took into his hand. Every day of the year the loweſt peaſant in his dominions who has ſuffered any injuſtice, or who labours under any grievance, has leave to preſent his complaint to the King. The next day I had the honour to be preſented to him. His Majeſty is extremely affable. He likes to converſe

claſs, he will ſay to himſelf, are thoſe who unite great virtues to great talents; the ſecond are thoſe who, without having ſuperior parts, paſs their lives in doing good; the laſt of all are thoſe whom nature has endowed with ſuperior underſtandings,

converſe with foreigners; and he had the goodneſs to ſpeak to me near an hour. I could not help telling him what pleaſure I had felt the day before in his gallery. His anſwer was ſublime; "I only did my duty."

Every Pruſſian and foreigner may addreſs a letter *To the King's own hand*, and in twenty-four hours he is ſure of an anſwer, if the ſubject of his letter deſerves attention. Theſe are the only two Sovereigns in Europe whom every one may approach directly.

If I were not afraid to appear preſumptuous in claſſing Kings, I would place the King of Pruſſia in the firſt claſs, and the King of Sardinia in the ſecond.

and who only uſe them to the injury of mankind.

Do you know that young Dutchman? ſaid a French lady to me once. No, Madam, I am not acquainted with him; but I know that he has made the tour of Europe—As well as his trunks, ſaid ſhe. If the travels of theſe gentlemen were only uſeleſs, there would be no great harm; but it is more than probable that every man who goes to exhibit his inſignificancy in foreign countries, without parts, and without an object, will collect there only vices, follies, and abſurdities. How different were the travels of Pythagoras and Homer, of Solon and Lycurgus, of the Czar Peter, and of Monteſquieu! Each of theſe men had talents, and an object

in

in his travels; and no one is ignorant of the advantages they gained by them. But if to the want of theſe two eſſential points, the traveller adds the want of conduct, he will bring nothing back to his own country (like my poor Ruſſian *) except ſhame and

* During his ſtory I often thought of La Fontaine's Pigeon:

Qui maudiſſant ſa curioſité,
Trainant l'aile & tirant le pied,
Demi-mort & demi-boiteux,
Droit au logis s'en retourna.

You would have thought of theſe lines of Shakſpeare:

How like a younker, or a prodigal,
The ſkarfed bark put from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embraced by the ſtrumpet wind!
How like the prodigal doth ſhe return,
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged ſails,
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the ſtrumpet wind!

Merchant of Venice.

deſpair,

deſpair, an exhauſted fortune, a ruined conſtitution, and falſe and ridiculous opinions of all the countries that he has ſeen.

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

PARIS.

I Have looked for ideas for many years on the ſubject of taſte, but never could find any ſatisfactory, either in converſation or in books. M. de Voltaire has ſaid in his *Temple du Gout*,

Je vis ce Dieu qu'en vain j' implore,
Ce Dieu charmant que l'on ignore
Quand on cherche à le définir.

I have the greateſt reſpect for the opinion of M. de Voltaire in matters of taſte; but with all the deference that I owe him, I believe a man's not being

being able to define a thing, is but a bad ſort of proof that he underſtands it. I ſhould even be tempted to believe the contrary; and I ſhould conſider a perſon's ſhewing that he was able to analyze a ſubject, as a ſtrong preſumption that he underſtood that ſubject. I conceive beforehand that all men think they have taſte, and that all thoſe who do not know how to define it will be of M. de Voltaire's opinion.

The term *taſte* is a metaphor taken from the *palate*. A good partridge is ſerved up to three men: one finds it good; another finds it bad; the third neither finds it good nor bad. The third is a man without taſte; the ſecond man's taſte is bad; the

firſt man has a good taſte. Bring a German grenadier to ſee the Belvedere Apollo, he will neither find it beautiful nor ugly; this is a man without taſte: ſhew this ſtatue to a Dutch Burgo-maſter, he will find it too light, he would wiſh it a little heavier; this is a man of a perfidious taſte: ſhew it afterwards to ten Italians, ten Frenchmen, and ten Engliſhmen, they will all find it beautiful, and yet each of them may have a different taſte.

Jean Jaques Rouſſeau ſays, "*Le "gout eſt le microſcope du jugement*;" and in another place he ſays, "*il ſert "de lunettes à la raiſon.*" In theſe two expreſſions the idea is the ſame, and the idea is falſe; and the reaſon why Rouſſeau miſtook is the ſame

that has miſled all the men who have written upon taſte. They thought it a ſimple idea, and it is a complex one. The cauſe of their error is this: taſte, in its literal ſenſe, is a ſimple idea; in its metaphorical ſenſe, it is a compounded idea. I explain myſelf by an example. The piece of pheaſant that I eat is addreſſed to a ſingle ſenſe, to my palate, which decides upon it. To what is the *qu'il mourût* addreſſed? To my judgment. Is it fine? I anſwer, that it is. Have I then taſte? No; I have only judgment: but after having paſſed through my judgment, it has ſtill another addreſs: where? to my feeling. Do I *feel* then the beauty of this *qu'il mourût?* Yes; then I have taſte; and this taſte is a compound

pound idea, and compounded of theſe two parts, judgment and feeling.

The degrees of judgment are extremely varied in men; the degrees of feeling are not leſs ſo; the combinations of theſe two parts are therefore infinitely diverſified; and hence ariſes that aſtoniſhing variety of taſtes that we meet in the world. Of thoſe thirty men of good taſte who found the Apollo beautiful, I ſaid, perhaps each of them had a different taſte; for even ſuppoſing the judgments of all equal, it is more than probable that each of them felt differently the beauties of this work; and in that caſe each of them had a different taſte. The three greateſt critics that ever exiſted were Boileau, Horace, and Longinus. Shew a ſub-

lime beauty to theſe critics; the taſte of the three was good; they would all agree, but their taſte was not the ſame; the faculty of judging was equal in all, but their feelings were different, and they would not feel this beauty equally; Boileau would feel it as a hundred; Horace as a hundred; Longinus as a thouſand.

I am ſure that theſe ideas upon taſte are new: I am not ſure that they are juſt. If they are not, I have no taſte; if they are, I have; for I drew them from myſelf *.

* The French do more juſtice to other nations, than other nations do them. There is, however, a point in which they ſeem to me to be unjuſt to the Engliſh. They deny that they have taſte. This is perhaps the only general idea in this book that does not admit of exceptions. The French allow the Engliſh talents and genius; but I never knew a ſingle perſon,

— either

either among the men of letters, or the men of the world, that allowed them taſte. A letter therefore, written by an Engliſhman on this ſubject, is not likely to be too well received. The preſumption againſt me perſonally is ſtill ſtronger, becauſe M. de Voltaire told me that Shakſpeare had ſpoiled my taſte. I do not know if that is true; but I have ſome difficulty to believe that he has entirely ſpoiled it; for I feel that I ſtill love the authors of the Iliad and of the Miſanthrope! But if theſe Letters, and the book I wrote in Italian, prove that I have no taſte, I entreat the reader not to judge a nation by an individual, and to be perſuaded that there are ten thouſand men in England who have more taſte than I.

From Letter XXV. to Letter XXXVI. can only be underſtood at Paris.

LETTER XXXVI.

PARIS.

To the Right Honourable the Counteſs of BRISTOL.

MADAM,

WHAT is Paris? There never was a man who could anſwer that queſtion. Had I the hundred mouths, the hundred tongues, and the iron voice, mentioned by your favourite poets, Homer and Virgil, I could not reckon the half of its virtues,

tues, of its vices, or of its abſurdities. What is Paris? It is an aſſemblage of contradictions, a tiſſue of horrors and delights, both rendered more ſtriking by their proximity. It is a country full of giddineſs and profoundneſs, of great ſimplicity and extravagant pretenſions. The contraſts would be endleſs. Here a veteran grown grey in the ſervice, and bearing on his boſom the proof of his bravery, walking in a public garden in woollen ſtockings, by the ſide of an opera-girl ſparkling with diamonds: there a dancing-maſter in a brilliant chariot, laughing at an author whom he has juſt ſplaſhed: here an old Meſſalina purchaſing the careſſes of ſome young male-proſtitute: and there a foreign prince exulting in

the chains of a theatrical princeſs. What is Paris? It is a vaſt, ugly, and ſhapeleſs city, full of wonders *; it is the Athens of Europe; it is the epitome of the univerſe. It is, Madam, in a word, a country where there is little genius, much wit, much taſte, and an infinite number of pretty women, but where there is not a ſhape ſo perfect as your Ladyſhip's.

Perhaps, at another time, I ſhall write on this extraordinary country.

* Among the maſter-pieces of art, which belong particularly to this country, the moſt ſtriking are, the front of the Louvre, the garden of the Tuilleries, ſome pictures of Pouſſin, le Sueur, and le Brun; the Monument of Cardinal Richlieu, and the *Petits-maitres*. I claſs this laſt Being among the productions of art; for nature had no more ſhare in his formation, than in that of a ſtatue; ſhe only made the block.

I quit

I quit it now, to ſpeak of a ſubject which touches me more nearly—Come then, my adored Shakſpeare, dear object of my idolatry, I am going to ſpeak of thee. Let a ray of thy genius enlighten my underſtanding; let a ſpark of thy fire infuſe itſelf in my ſoul; lend me thy clearneſs, thy nobleneſs, thy force, that, if it be poſſible, the elevation of my ſtyle may equal the dignity of my ſubject.

LETTER XXXVII.

PARIS.

WOE to the profane hand that dares to tear a leaf of the laurels which adorn the immortal heads of Corneille and of Racine. Woe to the ignoble ſoul, and to the contracted underſtanding, which imagines that it is impoſſible to extol one ſublime work, without depreſſing another; and which thinks, that, to render juſtice to the front of the Louvre, it is neceſſary to calumniate the Cupola of St. Peter's.

Let

Let Corneille and Racine wear with pride the crowns which they have ſo juſtly deſerved: let Sophocles and Euripides admit them as equals, and let the voice of all nations confirm their decree. Let Moliere be preferred to Italy and to Greece; let Plautus and Ariſtophanes refuſe the deciſion; but let impartial Europe impoſe ſilence on them, and force them, though reluctant, to acknowledge a ſuperior. Let Shakſpeare alſo have his place; and let it be that, and that alone, which would be given him by the unanimous ſuffrages of Homer and of Milton, of Virgil and of Pope, of Boileau, of Horace, and of Longinus.

Previous to my citing him before ſuch an auguſt tribunal, before a tri-

bunal which muſt weigh with preciſion his beauties and his defects; which muſt examine with a rigorous attention the ſources of theſe defects and of theſe beauties, and from the deciſion of which there is no appeal; let me be permitted to make ſome obſervations neceſſary to put the mind of my reader in a ſtate of impartiality, from which I have too many reaſons to fear it is at preſent removed.

Some celebrated writers have attacked this author with a rancour, and treated his defenders with a harſhneſs, that are, in general, inconſiſtent with the character of their nation. The firſt poet of England has been ſtyled a *Barbarian*; they have dared to call his defenders *vulgar*. The ſeduction of ſtyle has been joined to

the

the ſeverity of ſarcaſm; and the charms of brilliancy and grace have gained credit to criticiſms as falſe as they are abuſive. I reply not to abuſe: I have neither ſtyle, nor brilliancy, nor grace; but I underſtand my ſubject; I have truth and reaſon on my ſide; and I fear not the united forces of M. de Voltaire and M. de la Harpe.

It is plain that it is impoſſible for me to follow a plan; I do not attack; I only defend; and I am forced to follow the irregularities of the aſſailants. Let us begin then with M. de Voltaire.

LETTER XXXVIII.

PARIS.

A Lively attack is perhaps the beſt defence. I ſhall not however attack M. de Voltaire. I ſhould depart from my character, and I ſhould judge myſelf unworthy to defend Shakſpeare, if I were capable of injuſtice even againſt his moſt cruel detractor. I admire, with Europe, the univerſality of M. de Voltaire's talents; I love him for his ſpirit of toleration; I honour him for having protected the family of Calas. If his enemies refuſe him genius, becauſe they

they ſay he has invented nothing; they cannot refuſe him a quality more extraordinary, perhaps, than genius itſelf, that of being able to aſſume the talent of the moſt celebrated writers. No character was beyond the reach of this Alcibiades. He knew how to melt with Racine, and intoxicate himſelf with Arioſto; he was able to imitate the elevation of Corneille, and the majeſty of Virgil. He made depredations, it is true, upon every country, but he made them like a monarch; and what would have been pillage in an ordinary man, became conqueſt in M. de Voltaire.

I would not have any of my expreſſions upon this illuſtrious author conſidered as applicable to his writings in general, but ſolely to what he has

has ſaid on the article of Shakſpeare. I well know that I do not enter theſe liſts with equal arms; it is not becauſe the reputation of my antagoniſt is great and univerſal, and that mine is only juſt begun; for though this reaſon has already decided againſt me all ſuperficial readers, men capable of judging will liſten to the voice of reaſon alone. It is not then, I ſay, becauſe his works are in every library, and his buſt in every houſe, and that my name is ſcarce known in France*; it is becauſe he wrote to pleaſe, and that I write to convince; it is becauſe I think of the ground of my idea, and he thought only of the elegance of his phraſe; it is becauſe I am the

* And not at all in England.

ſlave

ſlave of exact truth, and that he never thought of truth at all: provided he gave with addreſs a ridiculous turn to a paſſage, provided he made a falſe expoſition in pretty language, and that he finiſhed his period with a brilliant ſarcaſm, or a refined piece of flattery, the ſhackles of truth were for him of ſilk; he broke them with levity; and truſting to the ignorance of his reader, he abuſed his confidence, and treated him with the moſt ſovereign contempt. I confeſs, I want this boldneſs; I will reſpect my reader, and I will reſpect truth.

Never was a writer more difficult to be confuted than M. de Voltaire. I read him; I read him again; I look for ideas, and I find only words. At each inſtant the ſhadow of a thought preſents

preſents itſelf to my view; I go to ſeize it, and I find only air. Like quickſilver this Critic ſlips through my fingers; and when I imagine I hold him faſt, the Proteus eſcapes with a burſt of laughter.

Ape, *Mountebank*, and *Barbarian*, are his favourite terms; and I conceive that there is a claſs of readers to whom theſe words will carry conviction; to whom even they will appear ſublime. For my part, I cannot anſwer them more than I can to *this Shakſpeare*, *ſo ſavage*, *ſo low*, *ſo wild*, *and ſo abſurd*. Abſtracting the coarſeneſs of this *barbarous* abuſe, what anſwer can be given to general accuſations? What anſwer would be given me, if I ſaid, *this Corneille*, *ſo cold*,

cold, ſo flat, and ſo diſguſting? And what anſwer ſhould I deſerve?

But M. de Voltaire has tranſlated paſſages to ſupport his criticiſms: anſwer them.

LETTER XXXIX.

PARIS.

WHEN I was at Pekin, I talked to the Chineſe about the literature of Europe; and for particular reaſons I undertook to prove to them that Moliere and Racine, whom the French boaſted of as great writers, were but very ordinary men. To ſupport this doctrine, I tranſlated into Chineſe ſome paſſages from theſe poets. I took my extracts from *Pourçeaugnac* and *the Cheats of Scapin*, and I took care to chuſe the loweſt paſſages I could find. As to Racine, I took ſome of his ſpeeches which were

were the moſt admired in France, and I tranſlated them into Chineſe proſe. The enchanting harmony of his lines, the ſeducing charms of his ſtyle, which had juſtly gained him ſo many enthuſiaſts in his country, were no longer to be found; and the Chineſe began to think that the French had exaggerated the merit of their poets. I was determined to have a complete victory, and, not troubling myſelf about truth, I took one ſtep more; when Racine had found the nobleſt term in his language, I looked out for the loweſt Chineſe term to tranſlate it by: did Racine ſay *ſenſeleſs*, *courſer*, *wild boar*? I tranſlated theſe words by *dunce*, *garron*, *pig*.

A Frenchman, a man of taſte, and a paſſionate lover of the literature of

his country, provoked by the abſurdity of my ideas, or rather inflamed with indignation at my want of faith, exclaimed, that my expoſition of Moliere was unjuſt to the laſt degree; and as to Racine, he offered to quote his lines—Alas! the poor Frenchman talked to the deaf; the Chineſe did not underſtand the French language.

This nation, whoſe heart is good at bottom, is full of witty malice: it reliſhes infinitely the ſarcaſm of pleaſantry; it is fond of talking, and is not fond of reading; and joins to the rage of talking upon every thing a paſſion more violent of ſhining upon every thing. I wrote prettily in their language; I lent them wit on a ſubject which they did not underſtand; I laviſhed careſſes on their authors;

I over-

I overwhelmed the French with irony and ſatire; my victory was eaſy; and in the moment that I write, the Chineſe believe Moliere an author of the vulgar, and are aſtoniſhed that a nation, ſo poliſhed as the French, can admire a poet ſo barbarous as Racine.

My laurels are ſtill freſh; the Chineſe find my ſallies charming, and they have learned my epigrams by heart. One reflection alone alarms me; I know that truth prevails in the end. I fear that the duration of my triumph will be ſhort. The day *may* come, that ſome Frenchman will travel through China, and that he will be able to make himſelf underſtood in the language of the country. If that day ſhould ever arrive, my laurels will fade, my pleaſantries will

appear cold, the laughers will be put out of countenance, Moliere and Racine will be reſtored to their place, and I ſhall remain an object of ridicule and contempt *.

* The people of Paris ſaid, that this letter was a *perſiflage ſanglant*, and a *chef-d'œuvre de méchanceté*, that M. de Voltaire had well deſerved.

LET-

LETTER XL.

PARIS.

HOW is it poſſible to paint to you the inconſiſtencies of this nation, which careſſes us at Paris, while ſhe threatens us at Plymouth; which is in raptures with Pope, and furious againſt Shakſpeare? "Yes, "Sir, they ſay to me at every inſtant, "Pope is certainly your firſt poet; "he is always reaſonable and full "of good ſenſe." Allowing theſe gentlemen to teach us how to value wit, that the French ſhould pretend to teach the Engliſh the value they

ought to ſet on good ſenſe and reaſon—the moſt determined Stoic cannot bear it.

Let not France imagine that England does not know how to eſtimate her men of genius; ſhe knows how to eſtimate them as well as to reward them; and ſhe does not admire Pope leſs for conſidering him as inferior to Shakſpeare. She is not ignorant that the tranſlator of the Iliad, the author of the Rape of the Lock, and of Eloiſa to Abelard, is a great poet; ſhe knows that the author of the Eſſay on Man is a profound Philoſopher; and that the man who wrote the Eſſay on Criticiſm, and the Preface to the Iliad, is an enlightened critic. The ſoundeſt ſenſe, the ſweeteſt harmony, the happieſt choice of

language,

language, are found in all his writings: his judgment was ſolid, his ear delicate, his imagination brilliant, and his taſte ſure. The Engliſh are not ignorant of the variety of his merits; and they well know that he poſſeſſed a perfection which Shakſpeare wanted, that of being always excellent. Pope is tranſlated into ſeveral languages, and it is univerſally known that he has as many admirers as readers.

It was then this Pope, who enjoying the higheſt reputation, and ſeven hundred pounds a year, tranſported by his love of poetry, and by his enthuſiaſm for Shakſpeare, undertook the laborious taſk of making an edition of his works; which, not having been printed for ſome years after his

death, were over-run with errors and with faults. Pope wrote a preface to this edition, in which there is this remarkable phraſe: "The po-"etry of Shakſpeare was inſpiration "indeed: he is not ſo much an imi-"tator, as an inſtrument, of nature; "and 'tis not ſo juſt to ſay that he "ſpeaks from her, as that ſhe ſpeaks "through him." Pope was the cleareſt writer in England, and theſe words are ſcarce intelligible. The reaſon is plain; he ſpoke of what he felt, and he felt more than language could expreſs.

In this edition of the works of Shakſpeare, Pope marked with inverted commas the paſſages which appeared to him the moſt beautiful. M. de Voltaire has tranſlated four of theſe

theſe paſſages; and has added to his tranſlation the following remarks.

"You will obſerve that this is one "of the beautiful paſſages that Pope "has marked with inverted commas, "to make the force of it be felt."

"Pope again tells his reader to "admire theſe lines."

"This again is a ſpeech which "the commas of Pope command us "to admire."

"This again is one of the ad- "mirable paſſages enriched by the "commas of Pope."

All theſe paſſages are ridiculous and flat. I aſk the ſenſible reader if he believes that Pope underſtood Engliſh poetry; I aſk him if he believes that this great writer would have inſured the loſs of his reputation,

with

with his own age and with poſterity, by commending as beautiful what was deteſtable; and then I deſire that he will decide for himſelf, whether the flatneſs and abſurdities belong to the poetry of Shakſpeare, to the commas of Pope, or to the tranſlation of M. de Voltaire.

LET-

LETTER LXI.

PARIS.

"IT is true that England has Eu-
"rope againſt her in this ſingle
"point, (it is M. de Voltaire who
ſpeaks) "and the proof of it is, that
"there has never been any of the
"pieces of Shakſpeare acted upon a
"foreign theatre." Would that be
a proof even if it were true? But
that is *ſo* true, that I ſaw Hamlet acted
at Vienna, and Lear at Berlin; and
I reſt the merits of my defence of
Shakſpeare upon the truth of theſe
two facts.

"There

" There is no glory *among us*,
" (continues he) but for what is well
" thought and well expreſſed." Can any man of ſenſe believe that there is in England more than in France? But judge of that yourſelf, and of the conſiſtency of M. de Voltaire by what follows immediately after.
" When neighbouring nations have
" nearly the ſame manners, the ſame
" principles, and have cultivated for
" ſome time the ſame arts, it ſeems
" they ought to have the ſame taſte.
" So the Andromache and the Phæ-
" dra of Racine, happily tranſlated
" into Engliſh by good authors, had
" great ſucceſs at London. I ſaw
" them acted there formerly; they
" were applauded as at Paris. We
" have alſo ſome of our modern tra-
" gedies

" gedies very well received by this " judicious and enlightened nation." Judicious and enlightened while ſhe applauds Merope; ignorant and barbarous in her admiration of Shakſpeare.

" Happily (he goes on) it is not " then true that Shakſpeare has oc- " caſioned the excluſion of every " other taſte but his own." M. de Voltaire anſwers himſelf ſo well, that it is uſeleſs for me to anſwer him. He will not be ſuſpected in this letter of being partial to the Engliſh; he has juſt made the eloge of their taſte, and of their impartiality; and he was in the right to make it; the Engliſh have no excluſive taſte; they always do juſtice to merit; they admire Racine, they admire Shakſpeare, they admire M. de Voltaire himſelf.

LETTER XLII.

PARIS.

"I Confeſs, ſays this illuſtrious Critic, that we ſhould not con-
"demn an author for having ſeized
"the taſte of his nation, but we may
"pity him for having pleaſed only
"her. Apelles and Phidias forced
"the different ſtates of Greece, and
"the whole Roman Empire, to ad-
"mire them." What an impoſing period! *forced*, and *the whole Roman Empire*—But how falſe always are his repreſentations! How little ſolidity was there in his judgment! or how

how little did he ſuppoſe in his reader! Was he ignorant that the men who compoſed *the different States of Greece*, and *the whole Roman Empire*, had eyes, and that nothing elſe was wanting to feel the merit of Phidias and Apelles? They ſpoke a language underſtood by all the world.

"We ſee to-day the Tranſylva-
"nian, thé Hungarian, and the Cour-
"lander, agree with the Spaniard,
"the Frenchman, the German, and
"the Italian, in admiring the beauties
"of Horace and Virgil." Why does he force me to make continual repetitions? Why are his expoſals always falſe? Horace and Virgil are certainly admired every where, becauſe every where their language is underſtood: but in what country have

have they a ſingle admirer who does not underſtand Latin? In Italy and France, I ſhall be anſwered, the Æneid is admired in the language of Caro; the Georgics in the tranſlation of the Abbé Delille. In wiſhing to refute me, they ſupport my aſſertions. The poet is tranſlated in both languages by poets; and fine verſes are rendered by fine verſes with all the advantages of harmony and of ſtyle. Has the ſame juſtice been done to Shakſpeare? Even if M. de Voltaire had not laboured to disfigure him, can proſe ever tranſlate poetry?

If ever a man was a poet, Horace was one in his Odes; and has Horace an admirer in the univerſe who only knows him by a proſe tranſlation?

tion? Or* is it poſſible that he ſhould?

But a ſingle example will decide this queſtion. Homer has been tranſlated in England in verſe, and in France in proſe. He has an infinite number of admirers in England who do not underſtand Greek. The tranſlation of Madam Dacier is more literal than that of Pope. I do not hazard myſelf when I advance, that Homer neither has, nor can have, in all France, the *felt* admiration of a ſingle reader who knows him only in the proſe of Dacier.

* Thus Lord Roſcommon:

Sublime and clear harmonious Horace flows
With verſe that cannot be expreſs'd in proſe:
Degrading proſe explains his meaning ill,
And ſhews the work, but not the workman's ſkill:
I, who have ſerv'd him more than twenty years,
Scarce know my maſter as he there appears.

Eſſay on Tranſlated Verſe.

LETTER XLIII.

PARIS.

I Shall cloſe my obſervations on M. de Voltaire, by an objection that he makes at the end of his *Letter to the French Academy*. This it is: "All our men of letters aſk, how it "is poſſible that in England the "firſt men of the kingdom, the "members of the Royal Society, ſo "many ſenſible and learned men, "can bear ſo many irregularities, "&c. &c." This objection, in fact, appears to have ſome weight; and I confeſs, I ſhould not be leſs embar-

raſſed than M. de Voltaire to anſwer it. It would be a want of good faith not to quote the ſolution he gives of this difficulty. " Am I miſtaken," ſays he, " in remarking, that every " where, but principally in free coun- " tries, the common people govern " men of ſuperior underſtanding?" Yes, M. de Voltaire, you are very much miſtaken; and, inſtead of ſaying the common people *every where* govern men of ſuperior underſtanding, you would have had much more reaſon to ſay, *no where*: and I appeal to every man of ſuperior underſtanding.

" But principally in free countries" ... The ſhades of liberty are too much diverſified, in different countries for me to be able to ſpeak to this

propoſition in the extent which the words ſeem to require. The propoſition then is ill preſented: he had nothing to do with free countries, but only with *one* free country; and if he had ſaid principally in England, as he ought to have ſaid, if he meant to convince, this ſhould have been my anſwer:

Every Engliſhman is born free, and glories in it with reaſon. The firſt leſſon he has received from his father, and the firſt leſſon which he tranſmits to his ſon, is, that independence is the inheritance of an Engliſhman. He is proud of being *himſelf*; of thinking, feeling, and acting *for* himſelf. Hence that variety of character which is in England, and which is not to be found in any

other country in the world. That a momentary madneſs might blind a nation, even of this ſtamp, upon any ſubject whatever, would not aſtoniſh me: but that a wiſe and free people ſhould obſtinately perſevere in a blindneſs of two hundred years; that a people learned in the ancient languages, and who travel continually to improve themſelves abroad; that a nation which has for ſo many years revered the names of Locke and of Moliere, of Addiſon and of Racine, of Boileau and of Pope; that ſuch a nation, I ſay, ſhould perſiſt ſtupidly to admire *a Mountebank and an Ape*—the idea is a prodigy, and men capable of thinking will believe it no longer.

Homer had his Zoïlus, and Voltaire his Freron; Bavius was the enemy of Virgil, and Pradon of Racine; the Academy of the Cruſca criticiſed Taſſo; and Cardinal Richlieu was jealous of Corneille: *Shakſpeare alone was above envy:* Elizabeth patroniſed him; Southampton * loved him; all the poets and critics, his contemporaries and ſucceſſors, have vied with each other in praiſing him; the admira-

* This was that noble Lord Southampton, the friend of the unfortunate Earl of Eſſex, who, having heard that Shakſpeare wanted a thouſand guineas to make a purchaſe, ſent them to him. "This trait of generoſity," ſays the author of the *Dictionnaire portatif des hommes célèbres*, "would paſs for a fable in every other "country but in England, where ſolid rewards "are beſtowed on the merit which other na-"tions only eſteem."

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tion of him encreaſes daily in his own country, and is going to increaſe through Europe; Jonſon *, Milton, and Dryden, Pope, Warburton, and Johnſon †, do not ſpeak of him but with tranſport; a whole nation adores him; and, if I had not here undertaken his defence, I ſhould have added, that he is admired by each individual of that nation, in proportion to the gifts which that individual has received from nature; in proportion to the knowledge which he has acquired by reading good authors, and converſing with enlightened men; in proportion to the

* Ben Jonſon.

† The illuſtrious Dr. Johnſon; the beſt critic, the moſt extenſive ſcholar, and the greateſt moral philoſopher now living.

number of countries that he has ſeen, and of languages that he poſſeſſes; in proportion to the ſtudy that he has made of the human heart, and of the beauties of nature; in proportion, in a word, to the depth of his underſtanding, to the variety of his knowledge, and to the juſtneſs and purity of his taſte *.

* Let it not be thought that perſons of taſte in England are ignorant of the defects of Shakſpeare; they know them, and are ſorry for them; but they know alſo, that there never was a poet who had ſuch *ſublime* beauties, ſo great a *variety* of beauties, or ſo great a *number* of beauties.

LETTER XLIV.

PARIS.

THE article of M. de Voltaire has carried me farther than I expected in the beginning. I have only one thing to reproach myſelf with on his account; which is, that I have treated him with too much mildneſs; and I aſk pardon for it of the ſhade of Shakſpeare *. I threw a veil over his well-known envy of all the living and of all the dead:

* O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with thy butchers.
Julius Cæſar.

I did

I did not even inſinuate the ſuſpicion of his being afraid that ſome of the fineſt paſſages of the Death of Cæſar, of Zaire, and of Semiramis, might be found in Julius Cæſar, in Hamlet, and in Othello; and that theſe are preciſely the pieces which he has moſt abuſed. The ſatirizing a great writer, is a diſagreeable, and, to me, an odious taſk. But why did M. de Voltaire ſatirize Shakſpeare? Why did he ſtab me a thouſand times in my travels, by the repetition of his criticiſms, which I heard in every corner of Europe? The paſſion of revenge is unknown to my ſoul; but the glory of our letters injured, and the love of juſtice, forced me to draw the ſword; and if I have but ſlightly wounded my antagoniſt, it is

becauſe

becauſe he is no longer able to defend himſelf.

M. de la Harpe is not in the ſame ſituation; I ſhall therefore treat him as he deſerves. He is ſevere; and as he judges with rigour, with rigour he ſhall be judged. Let it not be imagined that I am his perſonal enemy, or that I take any part in the infamous cabals that diſgrace literature, and thoſe who cultivate it. I acknowledge him to be a worthy member of the firſt literary Society * of the Continent of Europe; and if I write again, I ſhall † praiſe the au-

* The French Academy.

† This gentleman, in his Eſſay on Shakſpeare, has paid ſome very juſt and elegant compliments to Mrs. Montague; for which I ſhall thank him when I anſwer his book.

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thor of the Earl of Warwick with the ſame impartiality with which I ſhall condemn the calumniator of Shakſpeare *.

I ſay,

* I have ſaid, conſidering all the arts collectively, I ſhould give the Greeks the firſt place, the Italians the ſecond, the French the third, and the Engliſh the fourth. In *one* point, in literature, it would be unjuſt not to allow England the ſuperiority over all nations that do, or ever did, exiſt. And I require the univerſe to agree in this opinion, until it can name to me three men, choſen from all ages and all countries, equal to Newton, Shakſpeare, and the author of Clariſſa.

If England carries her pretenſions farther, ſhe is in the wrong: and ſome one ought to ſay to her, "Glory in having given birth to a philo-"ſopher, againſt whom no one dares to raiſe "their voice; to a poet, acknowledged by all "who underſtand him to be the greateſt ge-"nius that ever lived; and to a writer who has "produced the fineſt, the greateſt, and the "moſt

I ſay, if I write again, I have pleaſure in writing, and I ſhall have a great deal in anſwering the criticiſms of M. de la Harpe, and in making a faithful repreſentation of the merit, and of the defects, of Shakſpeare. But this depends on the ſucceſs of this book. Though I am not young, I am a young author, and I have not yet confidence in my talents. The firſt efforts that I made to pleaſe the public were received with indulgence: if this

" moſt perfect work that ever came from the " head of man." As to the reſt,

Parcere ſubjectis, et debellare ſuperbos,
Hæ tibi erunt artes.
(To ſpare the vanquiſh'd, and ſubdue the proud,
Theſe be thy arts.)

merits

merits the ſame reception, I ſhall continue to write; but as I write only for fame, if I ceaſe to intereſt, I throw away my pen.

FINIS.

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